

SPRING 1933

CINEMA

QUARTERLY

IN THIS NUMBER

ANTHONY ASQUITH

ANDREW BUCHANAN

ARTHUR ELTON

JOHN GRIERSON

A. HACKENSCHMIED

LUCIANO DE FEO

JORIS IVENS

in an interview

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etc. etc.

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AIDS TO LEARNING

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It is of great interest to every thinking person, as it presents the views of eminent Educationists, Film Producers and others interested in this important new development.

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CINEMA QUARTERLY

Edited by NORMAN WILSON

Review Editor: FORSYTH HARDY

London Correspondent: BASIL WRIGHT

Volume 1

Number 3

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CINEMA QUARTERLY

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THE SPECTATOR

THE credit titles which precede every film have always been a puzzle to the spectator. In the imposing array of names those of producer, director, scenarist, and editor figure prominently; but while it is known that all have specialised and individual tasks to perform, exactly how important is the influence of each on the film as a whole is a matter for conjecture. The influence of the director, formerly an unknown quantity, is now generally credited with the greatest importance. But when the director customarily works from a carefully prepared script—the work of the scenarist—photographs his scenes with the aid of an expert camera-man, and allows an editor to do the cutting and mounting, which many regard as the most important task of all, is it not unreasonable that he should be awarded the full glory of a creative artist? Is it not like giving the stage producer the credit which primarily belongs to the playwright?

G. F. Dalton has even gone so far as to declare that the real creator of the film is the scenarist, and that the director should be merely the interpreter of his instructions, much as the stage producer interprets the directions of the author of a play. The scenario writer is possibly entitled to greater recognition than he receives, but his position is not quite analogous to that of the playwright, who uses words as a literary medium. The scenarist, on the other hand, works and thinks in visual images, of which the words in his scenario are but clumsy descriptions. And no matter how accurate the scenarist's instructions may be, once the script is handed on to a director with executive powers, it is subject to whatever alteration or modification he in turn may fancy. Whatever economic reason there may be for this division of labour, aesthetically it is unjustifiable. A film, imagined

as a finality first of all in the mind of one man—whether producer or scenarist does not matter—cannot stand the interference of others not concerned with its conception without becoming changed in the process.

If, theoretically, the scenarist is the creator of the film, then, in practice, as Andrew Buchanan suggests, he must go ahead and do the director's work as well, using the camera-man (as the architect uses the builder) to bring his images to life, and finally, in the cutting room, give his film the unity and rhythm he had in mind from the beginning. To the spectator the film, and the film only, is what matters, and it is of little consequence whether the scenarist or the director assumes responsibility for its artistic unity. In the nature of things it would be more practicable for the director to become his own scenarist. If it is true that at present there are few directors with a sufficiently creative instinct or capable of the necessary sustained effort, it only means that the cinema, because of ill-organised development, has not yet created artists who are masters of their medium. The few directors who have given evidence of real genius either write their own scenarios, or in supervising every detail themselves and dominating the entire production by force of personality, they succeed by riding rough-shod over present studio conventions.

Good films are produced in spite of current production methods, not as a result of them. Only when there has been a re-organisation of studio procedure and the director is allowed sole control, with power to choose his theme, compose his film according to his own beliefs, and cut it as he thinks fit, will there emerge films which with any truth can be called creative works of art. Only then will a credit title have any real significance.

SHORTT-SIGHTED CENSORSHIP.—Our quaintly appointed, tongue-in-cheek, British Film Censor is a genial soul. Though he tells us in his report for the past year that his examiners have taken exception to no fewer than 382 films—the highest number on record—he endorses the opinion of “those organisations who have made a careful, unbiassed and critical examination, by experienced viewers, of the films shown in this country,” that “they are not nearly so bad as they are sometimes painted.” The exceptions, we are told, were not of a serious character, and entailed only the elimination of objectionable sounds or inadmissible words. Twenty-two

films were rejected entirely as being unsuitable for public exhibition. Some of the reasons given for these rejections are: unacceptable vulgarity, habitual and vicious immorality, collusive divorce, and sordid and brutal themes. Some sins in themselves are less heinous. . . . Immorality, for instance, which is not habitual, or vulgarity which is acceptable (by whom?). It will comfort the dear souls who concern themselves with the public's welfare that there are at least some "sordid and brutal" films which are too much even for hardened Mr Shortt.

Censorship in any form is an insult to the intelligence, but when it concerns itself with snipping out "inadmissible" words and differentiating between acceptable and unacceptable vulgarity, it becomes a patent farce. Provided a film does not violate to the letter one or other of the Board of Censors' rigid but inessential regulations, it does not matter how false or vicious it may be in substance. Lawrence's famous gibe about "purity with a dirty little secret," aptly fits to-day's censor-blessed cinema.

A system which permits the exhibition of films free from technical objection yet full of suggestive indelicacies, while other films, fine in purpose and achievement and produced as sincere works of art, are mutilated to satisfy the same inflexible regulations, is both illogical and intolerable. Sooner or later intelligent film-goers will be strong enough to demand that artistic films should be judged by a different standard from that applied to those of the box-office variety. Until then the film societies must carry out their function of showing films free from censorial interference and so help on the development of the art and create a public which can appreciate it.

CHILDREN AND THE CINEMA.—As the result of an eighteen month's investigation made by a committee representative of teaching and juvenile organisations in Edinburgh, it is reported that the influence of films on children is physically and morally bad, though mentally good. While many teachers admit an increase of general knowledge and a widening of outlook among the children, strong exception is taken to the themes of most films, which it is claimed do not give a true reflection of life. The report makes no definite recommendations, but suggests that the time is ripe for a "fuller development of supervision of the films in the life of the nation." It is difficult to say exactly what that statement means,

but it smacks of the interfering busybody. If it is believed that the cinema is an evil influence in the life of the children, tightening of the censorship would do little practical good. The films might be made less pernicious, but their quality would be no better. Constructive, not negative, effort is necessary to achieve improvement.

The cinema will improve in exact ratio to the intelligence of its audience, the growth of which depends on education and the ultimate teaching of critical appreciation. It will be many years, doubtless, before authority will consent to the teaching of film appreciation in schools, but unofficially teachers could do a great deal to help the children to discriminate between what is worthless and what is worth while. Judicious guidance can do more than any form of censorship to counteract the possible evil effects of films of the less creditable sort. If education would—as it could—create a new generation that is cinema-conscious, critical and appreciative only of the best, the influence of undesirable films would gradually fade to insignificance.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE FILM.—While the detached attitude of the spectator is essential to sound criticism, a knowledge of the technical details involved in production is also necessary to a proper understanding of the structure of the film as it finally appears on the screen. With this in mind a new feature, the "Directors' Notebook," has been started in this issue. Here directors and technicians will discuss problems of technique and treatment from a practical rather than an aesthetic viewpoint. Several well-known directors have promised to contribute to forthcoming numbers, and it is hoped that everyone creatively engaged in production will regard this feature as their own—as a place where they can freely discuss their difficulties and talk about their discoveries. While appealing primarily to the craftsman, the "Directors' Notebook" will give the spectator, who must always be the final arbiter of the value of any effect, a unique insight into directorial methods.

NORMAN WILSON.

DOCUMENTARY (2): SYMPHONICS

JOHN GRIERSON

DOCUMENTARY (1) is the Flaherty, ends-of-the-earth tradition in naturalism. Documentary (2) begins with *Berlin* or the *Symphony of a City*. It initiated the more modern fashion of finding documentary material on one's doorstep: in events which have no novelty of the unknown, or romance of noble savage on exotic landscape, to recommend them. It represented, slimly, the return from romance to reality.

Berlin was variously reported as made by Ruttmann, or begun by Ruttmann and finished by Freund: certainly it was begun by Ruttmann. In smooth and finely tempo'd visuals, a train swung through suburban mornings into Berlin. Wheels, rails, details of engines, telegraph wires, landscapes and other simple images flowed along in procession, with similar abstracts passing occasionally in and out of the general movement. There followed a sequence of such movements which, in their total effect, created very imposingly the story of a Berlin day. The day began with a processional of workers, the factories got under way, the streets filled: the city's forenoon became a hurly-burly of tangled pedestrians and street cars. There was respite for food: a various respite with contrast of rich and poor. The city started work again, and a shower of rain in the afternoon became a considerable event. The city stopped work and, in further more hectic processional of pubs and cabarets and dancing legs and illuminated sky-signs, finished its day.

In so far as the film was principally concerned with movements and the building of separate images into movements, Ruttmann was justified in calling it a symphony. It meant a break away from the story form borrowed from literature, and from the play form borrowed from the stage. In *Berlin* cinema swung along according to its own more natural powers: creating dramatic effect from the tempo'd accumulation of its single observations. Cavalcanti's *Rien que les Heures* and Leger's *Ballet Mechanique* came before *Berlin*, each a similar attempt to combine images in an emotionally satisfactory sequence of move-

ments. They were too scrappy and had not mastered the art of cutting sufficiently well to create the sense of "march" necessary to the genre. The symphony of Berlin City was both larger in its movements and larger in its vision.

There was one criticism of *Berlin* which, out of appreciation for a fine film and a new and arresting form, the critics failed to make; and time has not justified the omission. For all its ado of workmen and factories and swirl and swing of a great city, Berlin created nothing. Or rather if it created something, it was that shower of rain in the afternoon. The people of the city got up splendidly, they tumbled through their five million hoops impressively, they turned in: and no other issue of God or man emerged than that sudden besmattering spilling of wet on people and pavements.

I urge the criticism because *Berlin* still excites the mind of the young, and the symphony form is still their most popular persuasion. In fifty scenarios presented by the tyros, forty-five are symphonies of Edinburgh or of Ecclefechan or of Paris or of Prague. Day breaks—the people come to work—the factories start—the street cars rattle—lunch hour and the streets again—sport if it is Saturday afternoon—certainly evening and the local dance hall. And so, nothing having happened and nothing positively said about anything, to bed; though Edinburgh is the capital of a country and Ecclefechan, by some power inside itself, was the birthplace of the greatest of all men of documentary.

The little daily doings, however finely symphonised, are not enough. One must pile up beyond doing or process to creation itself, before one hits the higher reaches of art. In this distinction, creation indicates not the making of things but the making of virtues.

And there's the rub for tyros. Critical appreciation of movement they can build easily from their power to observe, and power to observe they can build from their own good taste, but the real job only begins as they apply ends to their observation and their movements. The artist need not posit the ends—for that is the work of the critic—but the ends must be there, informing his description and giving finality (beyond space and time) to the slice of life he has chosen. For that larger effect there must be power of poetry or of prophecy. Failing either or both in the highest degree, there must at least be the sociological sense implicit in poetry and prophecy.

The best of the tyros know this. They believe that beauty will come in good time to inhabit the statement which is honest and lucid and deeply felt and which fulfils the best ends of citizenship. They are sensible enough to conceive of art as the by-product (the over-tone) of a job of work done. The opposite attempt to capture the by-product first (the self-conscious pursuit of beauty, the pursuit of art for art's sake to the exclusion of jobs of work and other pedestrian beginnings), was always a reflection of selfish wealth, selfish leisure and aesthetic decadence.

This sense of social responsibility makes our realist documentary a troubled and difficult art, and particularly in a time like ours. The job of romantic documentary is easy in comparison: easy in the sense that the noble savage is already a figure of romance and the seasons of the year have already been articulated in poetry. Their essential virtues have been declared and can more easily be declared again, and no one will deny them. But realist documentary, with its streets and cities and slums and markets and exchanges and factories, has given itself the job of making poetry where no poet has gone before it, and where no ends, sufficient for the purposes of art, are easily observed. It requires not only taste but inspiration, which is to say a very laborious, deep-seeing, deep-sympathising creative effort indeed.

The symphonists have found a way of building such matters of common reality into very pleasant sequences. By uses of tempo and rhythm, and by the large scale integration of single effects, they capture the eye and impress the mind in the same way as a tattoo or a military parade might do. But by their concentration on mass and movement, they tend to avoid the larger creative job. What more attractive (for a man of visual taste) than to swing wheels and pistons about in dong-dong description of a machine, when he has little to say about the man who tends it, and still less to say about the tin-pan product it spills? And what more comfortable if, in one's heart, there is avoidance of the issue of underpaid labour and meaningless production? For this reason I hold the symphony tradition of cinema for a danger and *Berlin* for the most dangerous of all film models to follow. There's dope in it.

Unfortunately, the fashion is with such avoidance as *Berlin* represents. The highbrows bless the symphony for its good looks and, being sheltered rich little souls for the

most part, absolve it gladly from further intention. Other factors combine to obscure one's judgment regarding it. The post war generation (in which all cinema intelligence resides) is apt to veil a particularly violent sense of disillusionment (and a very natural first reaction of impotence) in any smart manner of avoidance which comes to hand. The pursuit of fine form which this genre certainly represents is the safest of asylums. The Film Societies prosper to tell you so.

The objection remains, however. The rebellion from the who-gets-who tradition of commercial cinema to the tradition of pure form in cinema, is no great shakes as a rebellion. Dadaism, expressionism, symphonics, are all in the same category. They present new beauties and new shapes; they fail to present new persuasions.

The imagist or more definitely poetic approach might have taken our Documentary (2) film a step further, but no great imagist film has yet arrived to give character to the advance. By imagism I mean the telling of story or illumination of theme by images, as poetry is story or theme told by images: I mean the addition of poetic references to the "mass" and "march" of the symphonic form.

Drifters was one simple contribution in that direction, but only a simple one. Its subject belonged in part to Flaherty's world, for it had something of the noble savage and certainly a great deal of the elements of nature to play with. It did, however, use steam and smoke and did, in a sense, marshal the effects of a modern industry. Looking back on the film now, I would not stress the tempo effects which it built (for both *Berlin* and *Potemkin* came before it), nor even the rhythmic effects (though I believe they outdid the technical example of *Potemkin* in that direction). What seemed possible of development in the film was the integration of imagery with the movement. The ship at sea, the men casting, the men hauling, were not only seen as functionaries doing something. They were seen as functionaries in half a hundred different ways, and each way tended to add something to the illumination as well as to the description of them. In other words the shots were massed together, not only for description and tempo (which is the pace of description) but for commentary on it. One felt impressed by the tough continuing upstanding labour involved, and the feeling shaped the images, determined the background and supplied the extra details which gave colour to the whole. I do

not urge the example of a minor film, but in theory at least the example is there. If the high bravery of up-standing labour came through the film, as I hope it did, it was made not by the story itself, but by the imagery attendant on it. I put the point not in praise of the method but in simple analysis of the method.

(Further demonstration of the imagist method I leave for a later article. In the interval all readers of *Cinema Quarterly* who can should see *Ekstase*, the Czech film, shown by the London Film Society. It is a very interesting film, and in several respects takes the imagist technique further than any film before it, *Romance Sentimentale* and *Enthusiasm*, not excepted.)

FILM OF SHETLAND LIFE

JENNY BROWN, the former woman journalist, who has already made several short films of the Shetlands, is preparing to make a more ambitious study of the life of the Islands. Miss Brown writes:—

“Before I left in the autumn I arranged with my crofter friends to shoot a film this summer with a story in it, and with them as the actors, and while I have been south arranging about my summer film and writing the scenario, they have been thatching a derelict croft on which a lot of the stuff is to be shot, and pulling down most of another derelict five miles away where the interiors are to be shot! The story is very simple and weaves itself naturally into the lives of the people—the story of all islands to-day where the rising standard of living leaves the enterprising young folk unsatisfied with the fight with the earth and sea that in the end means only an existence, and so when a chance comes the young people emigrate, while the old folk remain. I am not a Flaherty, but I hope to make a good thing of this film, with the atmosphere of the Shetland Island saturating it every place—the soil, the sea, the birds, the fishing. We are all working on it in a community and friendly profit-sharing basis, and my crofter actors are so keen and interested, they make sure nothing goes into the scenario that is not true to their lives.” This film will be post-synchronised.

COURAGE IN PRODUCTION

LEONTINE SAGAN

WHEN I began to work with the sound film I threw myself head over heels in this new adventure. I lived in the cinémas; I started thinking only in terms of camera positions and cuts; I hunted for film stories. It made one rather uneasy not to be able to collect in the twinkling of an eye an amount of new experience to correspond with twenty years of work on the stage. But on the other hand, it was exciting to explore new country. I had to quieten my conscience with the thought that intuition must stand for experience. As it is, it often happens that in artistic professions instinct goes further than learning. Instinct is an unconscious wisdom about things, together with a strong sympathy. I felt a strong sympathy with the film because it furnished new means of expression; because it made things visible that until now had remained invisible; but most of all because it put me personally before a new task.

Yet I could not entirely lay aside the spectacles of a person coming from the legitimate stage, and whilst I was working in the studio I struggled hard with myself *against* the movies and *for* the stage and *for* the movies *against* my own prejudices. Stage technique in its best period was modest rather than elaborate in decorative scenery. The spoken word reigned supreme. The most impressive performances were often played in front of a mere curtain. It was not done to make a virtue out of necessity, but it was intended to give a definite style to the acting. Poet and players were to contrast clearly with a mutual background without the eye being distracted. In the film I found I had plunged right into the other extreme. There was no need for limitation. Everything was to be had. Money was no object. Not only real furniture and properties were to be had but also real landscapes, architecture and types of people in all variations. While on the stage, the play was limited and enclosed by the wall of the curtain, it could in the film break through space and time and get into the open. It

could be expanded and it could be narrowed-in. It could even be interrupted by something entirely different—by a close-up of a head, a tower or a detail of nature. It was like roaming in the universe. But where was the idea of the creator to end? Where was the limit? . . . These were the surprises that occurred in a brain accustomed to stage methods.

I was surprised at the power to create independently placed in the hands of a director. (At that time I was unaware that the real powers are behind the scenes, in the offices of the film companies and of the Censor.) Power means responsibility. The film director is supposed to be an author, director, improviser, inventor, collaborator, all in one. True, he is surrounded by a staff of assistants; but it seemed to my inexperienced mind that the film director, if he doesn't happen to be the original writer of the scenario, runs the danger of pushing the poor scenario-writer or author to one side. It seemed to me like a game of "Hide and Seek" where the players hide behind chairs and tables and call out, "Where are you?" So—metaphorically speaking—I poked my head out and called: "Film author, where are you?" There was still so much old-fashioned respect in me for the first person on the stage, the author, that my god-like position made me anxious. Perhaps, after all, it was only cowardice. In any case, I made a sort of intellectual sport in pushing objectivity to extremes and I shouted at some imaginary film author: "You! You bring your idea. Form it filmically in every detail; build up your characters; show your conception of men and things, and don't hide behind the bulk of ingenious mechanism!" "And what is left for you to do then?" this imaginary poet shouted back at me. "I will help you. I will give shape to this work of yours. These others and I, we are the instruments which will form your notes into melodies." At bottom, I was very touched about my noble attitude, but secretly I was harbouring the thought that I really only wanted to shift the responsibility on to the author. For responsibility does not only mean responsibility for financial success, i.e., for the producer's money; not only responsibility for the direction of the actors, the handling of the camera; but rather responsibility for the truth and sincerity of the story: responsibility to the public for the reality of a view of life shown to it.

There was much else in my film work that puzzled me. Here, for example, was the scene set up in the studio: a scene taken out of the script without any connection with what had preceded and what was to follow it. As is well

known, all the shots that are played in one scenic set are taken in sequence, irrespective of their logical connection. Actors and director have to imagine the connections for themselves by the utmost concentration. Seen purely from the creative point of view, such a procedure must seem quite absurd: the dramatic atmosphere is utterly broken up each time and has to be created afresh. That the scenes were later to be given their original continuity of content and form through montage and cutting could help me but little in the hours when I wished to bring these bits to life. Accustomed as I was to work vitally in the theatre, both the actress and the producer in me objected at first to the mechanical fixing of such scenes. In the theatre I had been accustomed to keep the scenes fluid until the evening of the performance. Even then, one experienced surprises both of the pleasant and unpleasant sort; for the players are subject to the changes of their own temperament. Spontaneity in art does not lend itself to being fixed. The actor's art depends on the spontaneity of the spectator. Sudden surprises, sudden emotions, everything that in the theatre is awakened by the magnetic contact between the two sides of the footlights, must, in the case of the film, be provided afterwards during editing. But this again is a mechanical process of the scissors, carried out by the cutter or the director, and not the spontaneous contact between player and spectator.

So it almost appeared to me at first as if the actors were not by any means the first artistic necessities of a film, but rather were only a detail of the whole, in the same way as, for example, an aeroplane or a submarine; and it even became a matter for consideration whether the camera did not pierce further into the aeroplane or the submarine than it could pierce the shell of the actor. For such objects remain unself-conscious while they are being photographed; but how is the human actor to be spontaneously unself-conscious, to express the final truth in his features, when he has to experience utterly disconnected situations before a merciless camera? One may even feel inclined to ask, as some do, whether it is not really better to work with people who are not professional actors, but have the expressive features of lay folk who do not carry on their faces the complicated, sensitive mask, trained to portray a hundred different expressions. Flaherty, Murnau and the Russian directors have done so. In that approximation to reality, the camera is not only to be brought literally close to the actor's face, but it is also to tear from it its inner truth. . . . But who is to say where illusion ends and reality begins? The soul

of the actor is a piece of art to which the fullest expression cannot be given by the camera: it is like a symphony that is played on one instrument only and is not given its full value.

Everything becomes easier and more natural when one goes with the camera into the open and leaves to it the selection. Trees, water, animals do not let themselves be posed. They preserve their own individuality; and it almost seems as if the players too become infected by this atmosphere, as if they were dissolved into nature. In the studio, it is more difficult to bring them to the complete freedom which takes away poses and photographic attitudes. This is indeed the highest kind of film in which, as in the *Comedia del'Arte*, the actor becomes, as it were, a fascinating ball thrown backwards and forwards between the director and the camera—where catch-ball is played with him in the jolliest way and where everything turns round with him in a mad whirl. These are the films of Chaplin and René Clair. These are the most film-like of all films.

The difficulty begins when the sound film starts to deal with problems, and it is not satisfied only in providing entertainment: when it approaches the great general questions of society and education. The tremendous popularity of the cinema gives the film a corresponding power as an influence. Since the film has begun to talk, it appears to be becoming almighty. And even if, as has been maintained, it has lost thereby its artistic worth, it has certainly gained ten-fold in vitality. Now players are not confined to gestures only on the screen, like beautiful animals, but can express themselves in speech. And as the art of the film stands so much nearer to the world of everyday life than does the theatre, which is a world of fancy, scenarios dealing with the burning questions of the day ought to spring up like mushrooms. The film might educate the public to think for itself by confronting it with questions it must solve for itself. Because the camera can probe in everywhere and can disclose things at their roots, the number of possible subjects is unlimited. Only, in this connection, I do not believe that the manuscript or scenario can be regarded as a mere detail. It needs strong personalities to select and to form material, strong personalities to give it visible shape. It also needs complete freedom within the limits imposed by art and conscience. For this, courage is necessary, courage all along the line: courage on the part of those responsible for creating, and readiness on the part of the public to recognise and support their courage.

RHYTHM IN SOUND-FILMS

●

ANTHONY ASQUITH

THE importance of rhythm in films is universally acknowledged. It is generally supposed to be a thing for which you either have or have not "a feeling." If you have it you are "all right." If you have not "there is nothing to be done about it." On this comfortable many, even of those who direct or edit films, have, to judge from their practice, felt themselves absolved from the necessity of thinking about its nature. This article is a tentative and fumbling attempt to define film rhythm, and indicate a few of the ways in which it does or could manifest itself.

Although from the point of view that it tells a story in terms of visible and audible action the film most nearly resembles the theatre in its actual construction, it is much more like music than any other art. This, paradoxically, was more exactly true of the silent than of the sound film, because the rhythm of the silent film like the rhythm of music affected only one sense. It was expressed entirely in a succession of images, just as in non-theatrical music the rhythm is expressed in a succession of notes, without reference to anything outside them. The rhythm, in fact, was a purely visual one, not deriving any emphasis from or giving any emphasis to such sounds or music as accompanied it except accidentally. In the silent films there were three kinds of rhythm. Firstly, the rhythm of the film as a whole, depending on the general layout of the story. This is a matter of scenario construction, and in any case is common to any part of which time is an essential factor. Secondly, there is the rhythm of movement contained within the limit of a single shot. This is roughly paralleled by the rhythmical relation of notes within the limits of a bar or sometimes a phrase. And thirdly, and most important, there is the rhythmical relation of shot to shot—roughly paralleled by the rhythmical relation of bar to bar or phrase to phrase. This is most important because the fact that a film is a synthesis of shots is what most strongly differentiates the

film from the theatre, and because the emphasis caused by the change from one shot to another—the “cut”—is the film’s peculiar contribution to rhythm. There is no essential difference between movement seen on the stage and the movement photographed and projected on the screen. But a whole new rhythmical territory is opened up by the film’s ability to change the spectator’s angle of vision at a second’s notice. It is this that makes it possible for a climax of swift movement to be built up of shots which in fact contain no movement at all—shots of static objects—merely by increasing the speed with which they succeed one another on the screen.

A curious anticipatory parallel of a climax built up by what is essentially quick cutting may be found in the final section of the *Danse de l’Elm* in Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring*. There the fragments of a phrase, first separated as it were into different “shots,” are gradually brought closer and closer together until at the climax they form the unbroken series of notes which makes up the phrase. The actual speed of the notes has not increased. It is just as if a director cut a series of shots, each containing its own movement, at an ever increasing speed until the movements without increasing in speed themselves come so close together as to lose their separate identity and form one composite whole. But as soon as sound was introduced, the whole nature of film rhythm changed, because the rhythm ceased to be expressed whole in a succession of images and became a matter of the combination of these images with their accompanying sounds, just as the rhythm of a ballet is neither wholly expressed in the music or the dancing, but in the relation of each to the other. The rhythm of the sound film is therefore more complex, but it is also much easier to grasp than that of the silent film because the visual rhythm is reinforced by the rhythm of the sound. Sound film rhythm is not, however, the relation of movement within each shot to the rhythm of the accompanying sound. If it were that, it would merely be the rhythm of the ballet once removed and would be limited to scenes where the movement within the shots was in close relation to the sound, as in a dance. Sound film rhythm is essentially expressed in the relation between the sound and the “cut”—the change from one shot to another—because the cut is the rhythmical element peculiar to the film. This is clearly illustrated in the case of a film of dancing. Many directors seem to think they have put a dance into film terms merely by recording it simultaneously with the picture and sound cameras. True, they often change the shot during the dance, but they do not seem to realize that the most important thing is that this change

of shot could be rhythmically related to the sound. The shots themselves must dance in time, otherwise the audience are merely seeing a stage dance from different angles, and not a film dance. If this is not generally realized in such an obviously rhythmical thing as a dance, it is much less realized in ordinary dialogue scenes. It is a common fallacy among more intelligent film-goers that the ideal sound film approximates to the silent film and avoids dialogue as much as possible, because dialogue belongs to the theatre; and many sound film have been praised which, though possibly excellent films, were not sound films at all, but silent films with synchronized musical accompaniment and occasional patches of dialogue. Dialogue is not alien to sound films as long as it is treated in a way proper to the medium; i.e., as long as the visual image and the dialogue have a relation beyond the merely theatrical one of synchronisation.

Let us consider a peculiar case—let us imagine a scene of two people in a room quarrelling. Superficially this is a theatrical scene. It is confined to one set. The drama is entirely in the dialogue. It would be perfectly possible to set up a camera to embrace the whole set and photograph and record the scene straight through. If it were well acted it would be merely as effective as the same scene on the stage—and there would be no essential difference. True, the worst director in the world would no longer do this. He would change his angle during the scene. But the point is that the relation of the "cut" to the dialogue has just the same rhythmic importance as it had in the case of the dance. The increase in intensity of the sound of the quarrel must have a corresponding increase in the visual stream. And here immediately the director is faced with two alternatives. He can in his treatment of the picture either lay emphasis on the dialogue as sound of a certain angry character apart from the actual meaning of the words, or he can emphasise the meaning of the words apart from what may be called their tune. In the first case, he would treat them more or less as angry music and his treatment of the visual element would be to give the eyes of the spectator an increase of rhythmical intensity corresponding to the increase in noise and speed of the words. In the second case, his cuts would emphasise the meaning of the words. There would not necessarily be an increase in the speed of the cutting as the scene progressed, but the change of angle would occur on the words to which the director wished to give emphasis, and the content of the shots would be chosen to amplify the meaning of the words; e.g., one of the protagonists says; "There's no need to lose your

temper. *I'm perfectly calm*" On the word "calm" the director might cut to a close-up of the man's foot tapping the floor. Incidentally, in the first treatment the cut, if any, would be on the word "*I'm*" because regarded as sound it is the most emphatic point of the sentence, though from the point of view of meaning, "calm" is the key word. It is perfectly possible to combine the two and start by cutting to meaning, but as the voices become louder and sharper to disregard the sense and concentrate on the dialogue as pure sound, giving in the cutting a visual "kick" corresponding to the increase of noise and speed. In films as in any other art, generalisation as to methods is impossible. Every scene demands its own treatment, but it is possible to indicate roughly the essential elements in a medium, and it seems clear that rhythm in the sound films lies in the relation of the change of angle in the visual stream to the sound or dialogue which accompany it. To those readers to whom this has long been obvious, the writer can only apologise for having laboured the point.

FILMS OF BRITISH INDUSTRY

THE first numbers of the "Great British Industries" series of films collected by The Educational Films Bureau are now available, free of charge (except that of carriage) to recognised educational centres such as universities, schools, film societies, churches, welfare centres, boys' clubs, women's institutes, etc. These films have been made expressly for educational purposes, and form the nucleus of what will be a comprehensive library of industrial films. They comprise, among others, such varied subjects as *The British Oil Industry*, *The Port of London*, *The Making of a National Newspaper*, *Our Fish Supply from Sea to Slab*, *From Ore to Finished Steel Product*, *How a Talking Machine Record is Made*, *The Manufacture of Gummed Paper*, *The Cocoa and Chocolate Industry*, *How Soap is Made*, *The Scottish Shale Industry*, *How Mustard is Grown and Made*, *How Modern Roads are Made*. To facilitate their distribution these films have been entrusted to The Educational Films Bureau, and application for loan should be made to Captain Kenneth Paterson, the Librarian, at 46 Brewer Street, London, W.1.

JORIS IVENS

Interviewed by J. HULSKER

JORIS IVENS started as an amateur when the formation of the Nederlandsche Filmliga, of which he was a keen supporter, made possible the distribution of *avant garde* work. In five years he has become one of the principal directors of the country whose work first gave him inspiration in those early days: Soviet Russia.

The short film, *The Bridge*, the simple, unromantic, completely filmic report of the construction of a bridge in Rotterdam, with which he made his first appearance before the Filmliga, became a public success abroad as well as in Holland. It was followed by two other small films made in co-operation with H. K. Frank—*The Breakers*, an acted film which was not very successful, and the delicately poetic *Rain*. Subsequently Ivens made a very long film entitled *We are Building*, to the order of the Building Trades Union. Various parts of this film, such as *Pile Driving*, and particularly *De Zuidersee*, the impressive close of *We are Building*, have become well known. This film Ivens regards as one of his most successful works. Also well known is the film which Ivens made for the Philips electric lamp and wireless company, which was his first sound film. Less known is his propaganda film for Creosote, which he produced in collaboration with Jean Dréville.

In 1932 came the great invitation to go to Russia to make the now completed *Youth* film, which in particular was to be the subject of my interview with Ivens, whom I found at the end of February, shortly after his stay in Paris, in his studio, the attic of an old lighthouse on one of the picturesque canals of Amsterdam. Earlier that month Ivens had delivered a lecture to the Club de l'Ecran in Paris, when he showed some of his own work. This he accompanied by comments and criticism. I told him that I had read the newspaper reports, and that it had surprised me to see that he now turned against his older films which we all admired so much.

"I have not turned against them," explained Ivens.



From "Woman," a new Soviet film dealing with the fuller life experienced by women in the modern state, directed by E. Dzigan.



Two shots from the film "New Grounds," directed by Joris Ivens, now in course of production.



"That is, not entirely. Only I should not like to see us stay at the level I once achieved. I have made a name in Holland, and I still feel myself as being outstanding in the Dutch *avant-garde*." (He said this with the simple decidedness of one who is aware of his own power and knows no false modesty.) "The Dutch art of the film must be protected from becoming barren. Through my work in Russia I have learned new possibilities, and I should like to see others build upon what I have achieved.

"I see the development of film art as a relay race: the point which I have reached might be the starting point for others. I do not reject my old work; it was a necessary phase which had to be lived through; but from now on we must progress.

"In Paris, when I showed my film *Rain*, the public liked it and applauded; but I told them that it was a film which lacked foundation—a film from which man and his soul are absent. I next showed the Philips Radio film, and the public thought that this was what I had referred to and applauded more loudly than before. I said that this film, too, was no development of the documentary, that here also man and social life did not find a place. Then I showed my film *Zuiderzee* to indicate that there I feel I have achieved already something of the new principle, but can no longer remain either one-sidedly aesthetical or documentary.

"In my new Russian film I have tried to give the human element its proper place by introducing acted, dramatic scenes. By doing this I have entered a field which many will regard as dangerous: the borderline between documentary and acted film. It leaves me indifferent if one calls this an artistically unsound method. Dovjhenko even praised it as a courageous act; to him it was the most important characteristic of my film.

"I am firmly convinced that now is the time to increase the value of the documentary film by using human episodes. More of the spectators' interest would be kept by employing scenes drawn from the real problems of mankind.

"To me the film is that which grows up between the screen and the onlooker.

"The film should state a question and supply the answer. This can only be done when the artist takes sides, not when he is satisfied to regard things neutrally and objectively; that is, from the outside.

"You know that in Russia I have had the chance to

bring my ideas into practice. Unfortunately, I am unable to show you my new film, but it is coming to Holland in March, and, at the invitation of the Film Society in London, I shall also be able soon to show it in Britain."

I asked him about *Komsomol*.

"To start with, I had better say that the film's title is no longer *Komsomol* but *Youth Speaks* (in Russia *The Hero's Song*). You see, *Komsomol* means 'The Commune's League of Youth,' and the film does not really embrace all that. The subject, you will probably know from descriptions of the film, is not meant for abroad, but is intended to excite the enthusiasm of the young people who are working for the second Five Year Plan. In a short introduction the film shows the working conditions abroad and then gives, as a contrast, the enthusiasm of the young men who are building the second smelting furnace in Magnitogorsk, an iron district in the South Ural. I show how these young people get into contact with those in Kussbass, a coal centre in Siberia, 1500 miles away; and how these young labourers load up special trains in their spare time out of pure enthusiasm to speed up the work and help their comrades in Magnitogorsk.

"During the making of the film the attitude of the commissioners was very pleasant. I was given three full months to become familiar with the subject. Such a thing would have been unthinkable in any other country. My scenario writer, Sklut, was a man from the Youth Movement and a student at the Film Academy in Moscow, from which pupils of the higher classes are detailed to various producers in order to do practical work. Together we made a condensed scenario which, later, when actually on the spot, we worked out into a complete book. For this is another ideal: the scenario writer went with me to the Ural in order to evolve a final version in continuous co-operation with the producer and in close contact with the locality. The co-operation between the other members of our 'collective' was also perfect. My principal assistant—this will interest your British friends—was a young Englishman, Herbert Marshall, also a pupil at the Academy. An important member of the collective was Hans Eisler. *Youth Speaks* was one of the official films made for the celebration of the fifteen years' existence of the Soviet Republics. For the actual day of celebration it came too late, like most of the other celebration films. Some of them are not finished even now, such as Pudovkin's *Deserter* and Shengalai's *The 26 Commissars*. These finished, apart

from my film, are *Ivan*, by Dovjenko, and *Counterplan*, by Jutkewitsh and Ermler. My film was shown for the first time at the beginning of January."

"And was very successful, I read in the papers."

"I have certainly had very good reviews and found much appreciation during the discussion of the film, in which Bela Balasz, Pudovkin and Dovjenko took part."

"And what are your future plans?"

"In the autumn I go back to Russia to make a film in North Siberia. It may become a film about transport. All that is unsettled. In any case I will now start on my second *Zuiderzee* film. The material is ready, but I have yet to do the editing, which will probably take me a few months, as I always take great care over it. After that it will be combined with sound in Paris. For it is to be a sound film, not only with musical accompaniment but with sound-effects. The music will in any case constitute a dynamic factor in the complete film, in contrast to *Rain* where the music was solely accompaniment and where the scenes formed a self-contained composition. The whole will be 2000 feet long and the first part of the *Zuiderzee* film will be incorporated, though in very much condensed form. That part went as far as the actual closing of the *Zuiderzee*. Now wheat is already growing on the dyked-in land and the whole film will extend 'from water to bread.'"

I had to take leave of Ivens. One thing, however, we did discuss, which will be of interest to readers of *Cinema Quarterly*, as it relates to what was said in the last issue about Eisenstein and his Mexican adventure.

"Is it true," I asked, "that Eisenstein has fallen in disgrace in Russia because he stayed far too long in America?"

"About his Mexico film you had better not talk to him. Of course, he thinks it is terrible what has happened to his work. But he still enjoys the full confidence of the Government, or they would not let him go on lecturing to the Film Academy in Moscow. With all the work he has to do there, not much is heard of him abroad. But he is now working on a comic film which will soon be ready."

I left Ivens with the conviction that much may yet be expected from a man who combines a great talent with sound self-criticism.

Translated by J. VAN HATTUM.

FILM AND MUSIC

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ALEXANDR HACKENSCHMIED

I^N collaboration with the composer, Frantisek Bartos, I have tried in my experimental film of Prague Castle (now entitled *Music of Architecture*) to find the relationship between architectonic form and music; between an image and a tone; between the movement of a picture and the movement of music; and between the space of a picture and the space of a tone. This all being part of the wider problem of the relation between film image and sound.

Similar problems have already been encountered on the stage, by music itself, and by the silent film accompanied by an orchestra. These problems have been solved only intuitively by practice. On the stage a scene accompanied by special music can become quite different from the same scene without music, just as in the sound-film music can give an emotional, spatial, or rhythmic character to the picture, be it either purposely or by chance.

The fundamental element in the relationship between sound and image is the influence of tones of different pitch, timbre and force upon the relative spatial formation of the image. There is also to be considered the relationship of tones and colours, and considerable experimental work has been attempted in this direction. The faculty of having visual colour impressions on hearing different tones is possessed by many people, all of whom, however, do not visualise the same colour for the same tone. Skriabin, the Russian composer, possessed this faculty, and has recorded on the margins of his musical manuscripts the colours which arose in his mind while composing. When played on Pesanek's "colour-piano"—by which it is possible to produce on a screen, simultaneously with the music, coloured shapes of varying size—Skriabin's theory became clear, even to people who had not the faculty of seeing tones in colours. These colour compositions have a direct analogy to the sound-film I have in mind; the indivisible sound and film composition.

Similar experiments have been made by Hirschfield-Mack at the Bauhaus School in Dessau in his relector plays (*Reflektorische Lichtspielen*). By means of relectors he threw on the screen coloured geometrical shapes, capable of moving, and each corresponding to a certain tone. The spectators' impression was that these shapes sounded themselves. They were made to appear, move, disappear or change places in accordance with the rhythm of the music, thus introducing a geometrical and moving (almost dancing) component part. In this way Laszlo's modernist compositions of colour and music were performed.

Skriabin, Laszlo, Pesanek and Hirschfield-Mack put stress before all upon colour; but in the film we are putting stress upon shape, space and movement. There is not, however, a great difference, as in both cases the basis is the simultaneous fusion of musical and visual impressions into one emotional whole. The sound-film made the work much easier by introducing an unbreakable mechanical connection of both component parts.

The first film experiments of this sort were made by Oscar Fischinger in Berlin. In his *Dancing Lines* cartoons (*Tanzende Linien, Opus I.-XII.*) Fischinger was not interested in colour, but in movement and shape as he could feel them in music. He composed to given music, played on gramophone records, abstract and prevaillingly lineal images, following uninterruptedly one after the other as well as moving intermittantly or changing according to the rhythms or dynamics of the music. He preferred music predominantly rhythmic and gave an almost dancing character to the changes and movements of lines. Fischinger's work, a sort of visible lineal transcription of the music, was impressionistic, as, being a painter, he recorded visual impressions as they arose while hearing music with closed eyes. Music was the leading force, which he obediently accompanied by the dance of his lines.

It has often been said that the best film music is that which we do not hear—that is, which does not intrude upon us but faithfully follows the atmosphere of the film, its chief task being to remove the painful silence and the noise of the projector. This might be valid in the period of the silent film, which had no need of music and was even better without it. But for the sound-film this statement would mean the deepest misconception of the new medium. The silent film was better when music was smooth, servilely followed the action, and brought nothing new to the film, which the spectator could see as the

director had made it. But if the musical conductor endeavoured to create something new, if he endeavoured to strengthen the impressions of the film, then he became a violator of the director's work, and always made faults. The music would draw attention to itself by reason of its dynamic and rhythmic incongruities with the film as a whole and in parts, and if the spectator had a sense of film rhythm the result was ear-splitting. This was especially the case in Russian films which put stress upon montage.

The composer could not subordinate the rhythmic and dynamic changes of music to the changes of the film, because in doing so, he might violate the laws of music. The director, on the other hand, paid no attention to the future music and its laws. Music always brought forth some new and unforeseen changes in the whole impression of the film. The director expressed with the aid of filmic means all he wanted. Apart from the director's work, the composer wrote music according to the old independent rules, and the film served him only as the raw theme. This gave rise to music which was self-sufficient in its form and could be played even without the film. Film and music ran side by side, both endeavouring to express the same thing in different ways. They illustrated themselves mutually, and in some places the impressions accidentally supplemented each other, thus creating some new impression, unforeseen either by the director or by the composer. For a space there was something new—a sound-film; but a sound-film only by accident, and therefore bad on principle.

The musical film is a new medium, consisting of two component parts—music and film, both of which must be created simultaneously. Neither music nor film can be divided and performed separately, because one part without the other would be unintelligible. It is possible that music already composed, or silent film already made, may be used as part of a requisite whole. Such cases, however, are rare, for the actual work often involves some violation of the original, and it is therefore a responsible task to choose the parts. As a matter of course, it is much easier to make a new film with music already composed than to compose new music for a film already made, the laws of film composition being more flexible than the laws of music. But primarily it will always be the formal, syntactic relation which will condition the cohesion of both component parts, the content or motive relation remaining secondary and not necessary. The possibilities are far reaching and

await application as well as theory. Sound gives to a picture a new colouring; it determines its space and depth. The cohesion of music and film may result in counterpoint or syncopation of rhythm; by contrast it may give to each a new inner significance.

Here are a few examples to illustrate what a musical film really is:—

Films made to music already composed: *Romance Sentimentale*, by Eisenstein, to the old Russian music; *In der Nacht*, by Ruttmann, to Schumann's music; Czechanovsky's *Pacific 213*, to Honnegger's music; Fischinger's *Dancing Lines*; the opera air in René Clair's *Le Million*; the gipsy dance in Ozep's *Karamazof*, with music by Rathaus.

Music composed to a finished film: Honnegger's music for *L'Idée*, made by F. Massereel; Dessau's music for *Storm over Mont-Blanc*, made by A. Fanck (simultaneously with the picture of a planet enlarged by a telescope we hear a single long-drawn tone which gives the effect of space: one feels the surrounding universe); the music of Rathaus, Eisler, Auriac, Lou Lichtveld (*Phillips-Radio*, by J. Ivens), and Halländer—composed for different pictures.

Film and music composed at the same time: *The Song of Life*, by A. Granowsky, with Holländer's music (close-ups of a rich wedding-feast alternating in a slow funeral-march rhythm, so that with every time-measure there appears a new image; René Clair's *A Nous la Liberté!* with Auriac's music (simultaneously with the view of a big gramophone factory with open windows there sounds music as if of thousands of gramophones—this picture has the effect of great spaciousness and is very convincing: this is really a gramophone factory); many other places in the films of René Clair; in King Vidor's *Hallelujah*; in the new Russian pictures; and my short experiment, *Music of Architecture* (Prague Castle), with music of F. Bartos.

Translated by KAREL SANTAR.



Oxford University Film Society

Owing to pressure on space in this issue it has been necessary to hold over an account of the activities of the Oxford University Film Society, which was to have continued our history of the film societies movement. It is hoped to include it in the Summer Number.

MAKING CONTACT

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PAUL ROTH

“**I**N Uganda we chased elephants from the air and photographed them as they ran. That was very thrilling.’ ‘It’s a beautiful thing,’ he exclaimed, ‘and I’m going to photograph it.’ ‘The exposure had been so successful that Mr R. turned away with a smile on his face, which then changed to an expression of horror.’ ‘R. tells me that he will take as much as 50,000 feet of film.’ . . . ”

In this way I am informed of my actions and my ideas, but I cannot pretend to be responsible.

It is obviously premature to write of my intentions in the film which, variously described as depicting the “history of civilization” and the “conquest of the air,” I have recently undertaken for British Instructional Films in co-operation with Imperial Airways. It is with reluctance that I allow stills to be included in this issue. I can say nothing about the present moment of editing, for anyone knows that during the period of gestation the patient prefers to be left alone.

But there are memories and experiences and swift impressions which might perhaps be of some interest.

The nature of the theme suggested that the material from which the eventual film might be formed would fall into two parts. In England, there would be the phases of aeroplane construction, ground organisation and the elaborate procedure of the Airport of London. Abroad, there would be the full range of the two great Empire Routes to India and to South Africa.

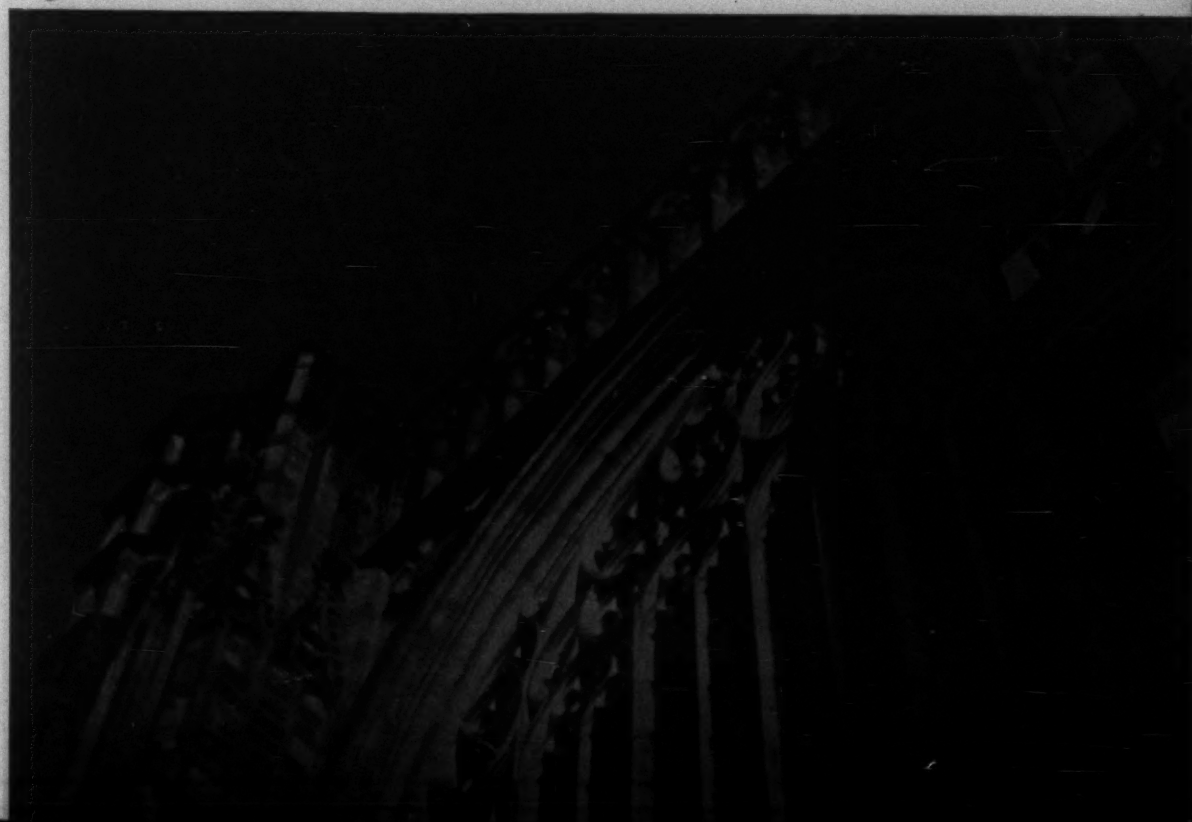
The resultant journey was completed on ordinary service machines running according to normal schedules. No special facilities for camerawork were available. No automatic cameras were tied to the undercarriage. Opportunities had to be seized as they occurred. The twenty-two thousand miles were completed in twelve weeks and two days; one day over schedule, which in itself is a justification for the making of the film.

I remember:

Light rippling on the wings of the seaplane. Vistas of small islands, like spattered jewels in a dark setting.



From "Music of Architecture," (Prague Castle), an experimental sound-film by Alexandr Hackenschmied.





From the aeroplane construction sequence in the Imperial Airways film, "Contact," directed by Paul Rotha (British Instructional).



Pointed needles of cypresses stretching up in jagged rows. Every few minutes the toy towns of the Balkans: multiplications of little square coloured houses. The ever-changing light and shade on the rounded moulded mountains. Then sheets of sparkling sea, divided into a million trickling lines of light. This from Athens to Palestine. . . .

Before dawn, the earth surrounding Galilee dropping away in the flickering light of the paraffin flares. Above, the bursting sun revealing a new world, with its own cities, valleys and mountains—rising, towering, twisting formations of clouds. Here one is utterly remote from reality. Presently there is nothing but blinding white desert, spotted with dark bitumen pools. At the edges the sky and desert simply mix into each other. . . .

A crumbling dust heap beneath a blistering sun. Broken-off columns of flat bricks rising up against a dark sky. A native boy stumbles and, in so doing, demolishes a portion of Babylon. The clatter of the falling mud bricks ceases in a thick cloud of dust and all is again silent. It was night, I remember, before we reached the dirty hotel in Baghdad. . . .

Dramatic white clouds piled into an indigo sky, which later burst into thunder. About dusk, there were groups of game—impala, gazelle, dikdik—in the thickets round Lake Naivasha. Too late to photograph, although the Kenya light is of crystal clarity. That day we had been to the Escarpment and looked at the massiveness of volcanic Longonot. . . .

The amazing colour of Uganda, where native women wear silk bindings of brilliant ultramarines, scarlets, and purples. They walk with a superb grace, swinging slightly from the hips, a carriage grown from the constant carrying of loads on their heads. Miles and miles of red earth roads and a profusion of fantastic foliage—cactus, hibiscus, candelabra, elephant's shiver. . . .

The tragic expressions of the native miners as they come to the surface in the Rand Valley gold mines. Our car was drawn up alongside the surgery. In the compounds they sleep on cement beds and are shown old American Westerns on Saturday nights. Johannesburg. From the roof of the highest building you can see the gold rift splitting the newly-born city in two. A veritable Cimarron city, built on gold. . . .

Journalists as a whole were disappointed. There were

no sensations to relate. A forced landing in Tanganyika and a hasty retreat from a hungry lion in the bush near Murchison Falls. But this was nothing to palates jaded by the exploitations of a Congorilla outfit or a Trader Horn safari. Besides, we did not carry guns. A unit of three cannot be taken seriously in a continent swept by news-reel sound vans. Yet they liked our sincerity and realised that we were looking at their country from a different point of view. Naturally, almost every town expected prominence for itself in a film that would perhaps run for an hour. They charmingly showed us every beauty-spot, and quite justifiably, because it was difficult for them to grasp that I was not making a travel film.

Long before leaving England, before shooting had begun at Coventry and Croydon, I had written a theoretical script expressive of my theme. When I arrived in an unknown village or city, it was never the question of shooting just anything of interest. On the contrary, it meant the selecting of the most significant material to express a certain sequence in the script. Had I another theme in mind, obviously the material shot would have been completely different. The wealth of material was overwhelming. Yet I returned to England several thousand feet of unexposed negative.

Difficulties were abundant, and mostly unexpected. Mechanical camera troubles, temperaments, customs, illness—all making for an unsettled state of mind and demanding instant decisions. It was impossible to alter schedule, for tickets had been booked months ahead. But few films of this nature can be made smoothly, especially in this case when the unit had to be in a constant state of preparedness for action and at the same time travelling for weeks on end.

Occasionally news reached us. *Rome Express* had at last reached terminus. An Institute was being formed. *Rain* was not the picture one had expected. Pabst had finished turning *Quixote*. But it was all remote. It had nothing in common except the celluloid we were both using. When you are flying low over densely-packed trees, hoping that the sun will soon move round so that you can shoot; when you are damn-crazy at not having taken a shot in Arabia because you had believed the Nubian Desert was better and it proves not as good; when you are mad with the swarming onlookers in a pox-ridden bazaar while you are trying to take a close shot; when you are unpacking the camera cases for the third time that day for still another customs examination

—then you don't give a damn what they are writing or making at home. One film and only one must matter, and that is your own.

One thing was clear. Interest in good cinema is not a European monopoly. Almost everywhere I found a tremendous enthusiasm for films. In Africa particularly they are waiting for sensible, straightforward films which they are not getting. The most surprising people in the most surprising places made remarkable statements about cinema, plainly showing that they had given the matter much thought.

This brief note would not be complete without mention of the Cape Film Society, news of which has already appeared in the *Quarterly*. I shall not quickly forget their warm reception and their intelligent assistance while our unit was in South Africa. As in England, these far-flung societies have their troubles; with censorship and licensing regulations, but more especially with the difficulty of getting films. Yet I am certain that their enthusiasm will pull them through.

DOCUMENTATION AND RESEARCH

THE WORK OF I.I.E.C.

DR. LUCIANO DE FEO

THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL CINEMATOGRAPHY initiated its work by collecting, in the first place, the most complete documentation possible on cinematograph activities throughout the world. For this purpose it had to create a library for books, and one for magazines, newspapers, etc., that had been published pertaining to the cinema. The magazine library (Emeroteca) is almost complete. More than 800 reviews and newspapers from every part of the world are regularly sent to the Institute and are used, as will be explained later, for the formation of an informative collection of notes. The library is being rapidly developed and both library and emeroteca are open to those who wish to profit by them for their studies and researches. The documentation office has, up to the present, compiled over 20,000 notes or bulletins, divided

according to subject and covering every point in which the cinema, either directly or indirectly, could be interested. These notes, in their turn, are used by students, institutions and the Governments of different countries, or as material to elaborate articles, etc., which appear in the Institute's Review.

The Institute has also launched a series of enquiries throughout the world, distributed through the medium of the various governments, for the purpose of ascertaining the following:—

(a) What cinematograph legislation (fiscal régime, censorship, régime pertaining to the structure and technical construction of cinematograph halls; systems for the prevention of fire; rules governing hygiene and morality, etc.) exists in the various countries.

(b) The use, and eventual use, of the cinema in connection with agriculture.

(c) The use, and eventual use, of the cinema in connection with labour.

(d) The use, and eventual use, of the cinema in connection with hygiene and social prevention, including also problems relative to accidents.

(e) The use, and eventual use, of the cinema in connection with workmen's leisure hours.

Further to these, the Institute initiated a series of enquiries of a strictly didactic-social character: (1) Directed to school children of the various nations which gave their official support. This enquiry consisted of a questionnaire containing about 100 questions, divided into 33 groups, and many thousands of them were distributed. (2) Exclusively didactic and, therefore, sent only to teachers. Several thousands of replies have been received, and many of them constitute valuable data. (3) Sent to mothers, and compiled with the collaboration of the International League of Women.

Correlative to this work of documentation and research is the work of construction which is progressing as follows:—

LEGISLATION.—The information required has been collected from all countries. For some countries, the Board of Film Censorship has sent most interesting reports to the Institute, which have been published among the articles in the Review. A complete report on the *fiscal régime* in connection with films, in every country of the world, has been published in the numbers from July to September, 1929; the reports on *film censorship*,

for each country, have also been published since the beginning of the Review, and, up to the present, about thirty reports have appeared; a report on the *censorship of films destined for minors* was published in the March issue, 1930; a report on legislation pertaining to *educational and cultural films*, and one on *authors' cinematographic rights* have also been published. Other legislative studies are in preparation.

AGRICULTURE.—As a result of investigations made by the office of the Institute specialising in this particular field, a series of useful monographs, and the results of the enquiries made on the utility of films in agriculture, were published in the Review for August and September, 1931.

LABOUR.—The enquiry made in this field, with special attention to its rationalisation, has resulted in the publication of a special double issue, July-August, 1930, which, on account of its importance, has since been published in book form by the Institute.

HYGIENE.—In this section the work of the Institute has also been profitable, the results of its enquiries having been published in the May issue, which was exclusively dedicated to problems pertaining to hygiene.

The questionnaire sent to school children, boys and girls of all ages, engaged in every branch of study, resulted in the following:—

(1) A complete enquiry, published also in book form, on the phenomenon of *Fatigue due to Cinematograph Projection*. This enquiry was completed, for the technical and scientific sides of the questions, by competent authorities.

(2) The publication of *The Impressions of War Films on Young People*. The results of this enquiry, on account of the tone and the great number of replies received, occupies several numbers of the Review.

(3) A publication of the enquiry made on the utility of educational films, for which the Institute gathered together the opinions of the children themselves.

(4) The publication of the enquiry sent to teachers—which resulted in over 3000 replies—together with all the suggestions made, not only for a greater valuation of educational cinematography but also in regard to the value and effect of the projection of theatrical films on children.

(5) The results of the enquiry made on the phenomenon of the frequency of children's visits to the cinema are being published.

Other very important enquiries are being examined and elaborated, among these being the one sent to mothers.

A long and exhaustive study of a historical character has been published on Visual Teaching as carried out through the centuries, through which there is clear demonstration of how, in each century, with all the possibilities and means at the disposal of the people, the problem of visual teaching has always been a matter of study and preoccupation for the teachers.

Another important item is the compilation of a world cinematograph encyclopædia, which will be published in five languages and will constitute the most complete work, chiefly from a scientific and technical point of view, that has ever been made in so far as the screen is concerned.

An international catalogue of educational, cultural, and scientific films is being made. To gather together the material necessary for this laborious task the Institute appealed direct to various governments for assistance, and the catalogue, in view of its object, will have a value and character essentially official.

A draft convention for the abolition of customs barriers against educational films has been submitted to various governments for their approval. The purpose of this convention is to allow all films that have been officially recognised by local official institutions and by the I.I.C.E. as either educational, cultural, or scientific, to cross the frontiers of all countries without any hindrance of a fiscal character.

These are the chief works undertaken and carried out, or in the process of being carried out, by the Institute at Rome—works which essentially and logically lead up to the *International Review of Educational Cinematography*, the monthly publication of the Institute which appears in five languages and five different editions (French, German, Spanish, Italian and English).

The I.I.E.C. can boast, to its merit, of having the authentic international possibility of an integral collection of all data necessary for its studies, not only through the spontaneous and complete collaboration of various governments, but through the efforts of the committees that are being constituted in each country, in an official capacity, for the purpose of creating centres of activity. Up to the present these committees have been officially constituted in Germany, England, France, China, Roumania, Chile, Czechoslovakia, and Holland, and others are being formed. On these committees figure personalities of high esteem in science, culture, and national politics.

DIRECTORS' NOTEBOOK

CREATIVE DIRECTION.—In a surprisingly short time, “documentary” has become transformed from a mere word into a sentence—almost a life sentence for all those who happen to be making films from natural material. I say natural material guardedly, for so much of it is disconcertingly unnatural, and therefore, at the very outset, one is faced with a certain bewilderment. But if we keep our heads we may be able to differentiate between the fussy artistic naturalness in the world and the real stuff, though just how far we can go feeding on this real stuff is a very debatable point if we happen, as I do, to be primarily concerned with the production of reels which must fulfil commercial requirements. Reality served undiluted is not quite as acceptable to the majority as some imagine, and, consequently, it is necessary (for the majority) to blend the real or natural film with what I suppose one would call the unnatural—that is, glimpses of the more artificial phases of super-civilization. They are so much prettier to gaze upon, providing, of course, one does not stare too hard, and they soften the grimness of *raw* life—anything raw being most indigestible for those accustomed to the Grand Hotel menu.

It would seem, therefore, that to categorise all films which are non-fictional as documentary is rather a mistake, because many of them do not fulfil the requirements of the documentary, and, what is of greater importance, were never intended to do so. I could quite easily establish six distinct categories into which films made from natural material could be logically placed, each one fundamentally different, except, of course, that all would be blessed with the good fortune of never having been borne in a studio. Perhaps they would *all* be documentaries; perhaps none of them would be. Nevertheless, I certainly feel we should avoid encouraging this word to hover over every film that claims to be natural, or raw, or even under-done, otherwise we shall inevitably be criticising products which have been wrongly forced into a category that is sadly in need of a category itself.

To lead this point further home, my own particular

problems in the production of the Cinemagazine do not include a struggle to mould each reel according to the documentary ideal, but to create something which cannot be immediately labelled as anything in particular, in order that its appeal may be as wide as possible. In this connection, it may be of interest if I mention that I have always secured the best results with a minimum of assistance. Either I do the whole job of making a sequence myself, or I arrange for another person to do it without interference. What is wrong with the average film is that too many people have made it, and it makes no difference whether it is a brief analysis of a blast furnace or a lengthy sex pantomime. Consequently, I disagree fundamentally with G. F. Dalton's argument against montage as much as I disagree with the abuse of that word. He states that the director's function is interpretative—corresponding to that of the conductor of an orchestra, and that the creative artist is the scenarist. May I point out that the scenarist *should also be the director*, thus vesting that imposing figure with the powers of creation. And the end is not yet in sight—for the scenarist, having created his scenario, should stride on to the floor (or into the natural world) and direct every foot of the picture, and then hurry away into the cutting room and *cut* the production himself. In other words, he should play all the instruments in the orchestra which Mr Dalton would have him conduct, and the music should be his own composition. I am fully aware that this sort of thing rarely happens, but that is merely a cause for lament. On this principle I work, and really I can think of no other way. I have watched all kinds of directors working from scripts written by people they have rarely met, turning over the pages feverishly to find what "comes next"; and then the cutters have stepped in, working quite independently of everybody; and I have seen the ultimate productions, which might have been worth while, lacking all things which would make them so, quite naturally.

Whether it be a canning factory, a tour of a primitive village, a fashion show, a liner's engines or an ordinary mellow drama, let someone with a brain create it, write it down, go and shoot it, then cut it, and cut it again until it is right, and then let him say, "Here is my film. How do you like it?" And even if we don't, we shall respect it.

ANDREW BUCHANAN.



From "Dance Flaws," a recent Ideal Cinemagazine, directed by Andrew Buchanan.





Georges Rigaud and Pola Illery in a scene from "Le Quatorze Juillet," directed by René Clair. Below: Another shot from the same film.—(Films Sonores Tobis-Paris).



BACKGROUND IN DOCUMENTARY.—A difficulty which one comes up against in shooting industrial interiors is the fact that the object which is to fill the picture is often so placed that behind it there is a muddled collection of people and machines, or windows, or a dirty brick wall. This often makes it impossible in the finished shot for the eye to concentrate on the important feature. It is distracted by the dirty semi-lit background, and the design of the shot is lost.

It is this factor, more than any other, which makes most industrial films so poor. However skilful the cameraman, he is unable to kill the background or to isolate the foreground. As far as I was concerned it was this factor more than any other which held up development of a documentary technique. This difficulty immediately arose in the machine-shop sequence of *Voice of the World*. To kill the confused background of machines the object had to be flooded with light. This killed the background, but flattened out the object and threw into relief every spot of grease and dirt. In the end I had to hamper production by shooting up against a dark roof or down against a concrete floor. A level shot was often ruined by windows.

I got round this difficulty to a certain extent by putting up backings of opaque black screens. This was satisfactory for close-ups and details, but invariably gave mid-shots a strange lost appearance by removing all background. What was wanted, therefore, was something to kill the background without eliminating it from the picture altogether; something to soften it, something to have the effect of a gauze, not over the lens but over the background.

On a later E.M.B. production, I experimented with a light wooden frame, six feet by four, covered with black gauze, and propped up behind the object. This was immediately successful. Not only was it invisible on the film, even if placed two feet from the lens, but it cut out all the unwanted high lights, and the foreground was isolated against a velvety soft background with no obtrusive features. A brick wall instead of killing every picture became a pleasant tessellation. One could shoot straight at windows without danger.

By thus freeing documentary production from one of its major restrictions, its whole field of material expands. In the future I hope to experiment further by applying the gauze to studio and exterior production and also by using coloured or white materials.

ARTHUR ELTON.

DIRECTORS SHOULD BE WRITERS.—Writers make the best screen directors. A director tells his story by pictures. He must have a knowledge of story values. He must know how to put the vital personality into his plot so that it will fairly live and breathe on the screen. On paper, a writer must be able to do this same thing when he concocts a story, or else he won't be able to sell it to an editor. So it is with the director, who, unless he knows how to present his material convincingly, cannot sell it to an audience. I think that it is wiser for a man who wants to direct pictures to learn to think up stories first—it gives him a better grasp of his profession.

FRANK CAPRA.

SIGNIFICANT SOUND.—I look forward to the development of sound imagery, the development in the use of what might be called significant sound. The naïve view is that when you see an object you should also hear the sound of it. But why should you? To hear the natural sound is to repeat the object. Sometimes it may help the appreciation of the object. At other times it may merely represent a stupid tautology. You might be using another sound to complement the mute image, to fill out its description, to say something further. I understand that a scene in a new Pudovkin film depicts a riot between the Berlin workers and police. When the workers start to fight, the accompanying sounds of their blows are nothing so flabby as dull thuds. They are harsh, mechanical sounds significant of the industrial world they represent.

That is one line on which sound will develop. Another is represented by a sequence in *The Road to Life*. Towards the close of that film, a train arrives at a village bearing on its cowcatcher the dead body of the boy who has lost his life fighting for the new régime. A multitude of people are waiting. But it is not they who express grief. They do not mutter in stage fashion. They do not utter a loud groan. The engine with a long sigh of escaping steam does it more perfectly for them.

JOHN GRIERSON.

(The Editor will welcome short notes suitable for inclusion in the *Directors' Notebook*, which is intended to be an open forum for the discussion of problems of technique and treatment. Several well-known directors have promised to contribute to forthcoming issues.)

THE MISCELLANY

APOLOGY FOR NEWSPAPER CRITICS.—The critic's task is always difficult; torn between his own prejudices, the accepted standards of the art, and his duty to those who listen to him, he must resolve their conflicting claims before he can form a valid judgment. Some critics seek a refuge in mere explanation; they create the technical language of the art. Some apply the social or aesthetic theory that fashion dictates; others translate their reactions into a prose form—the litterateurs. These divergences have always existed. Walter Pater before *Mona Lisa* is as legitimate a critic as Clive Bell before Cézanne. The elevation of the film into an adequate art-form can only come through intelligent criticism; but the film critic cannot be expected to achieve the untemperamental calm that is impossible even in arts stabilised by tradition. For the cinema's first masterpiece was created only fourteen years ago; its most exhaustive history is no large volume. Its aesthetic is still a source of bitter argument among those who have freed themselves from the literary and dramatic preconceptions that obstruct the way "towards a film aesthetic." Its material is impermanent as the plastic arts are not, and the critic must cultivate not only an eye as the musician has cultivated his ear, but, most difficult of all, must appreciate and retain the running commentary of his mind. This is no reporter's work; for the subconscious attitudes, the minds of scenarist and director and cameraman and editor each adding his contribution to the final unity, must be analysed, appreciated, condemned, all whilst the projector-shutter clicks unrestingly. And for this there is no training. The film's art is ignored in the schools, where the potential audiences of to-morrow are formed, and the intelligent man must teach himself to criticise. So the newspaper critic wanders into the new world, unhelped by the aestheticians who have not yet produced—how could they, in only fourteen years?—the settled terminology of an accepted school of thought. When time has tested the more serious works of the cinema, and the intelligent critic's attitude is clear, his terms of an acknowledged validity, he will be able to give a lead to the newspaper critic, who at present can only ignore the indefinite thought and the immature expression which mars so much intelligent film criticism.

THOMAS SIMMS.

SCENARIST AND DIRECTOR.—To one who has laughed and cried for several years at the inanities quaintly called "film theory," the most of Mr Dalton's article ("The Misconception of Montage," *Cinema Quarterly*, Winter 1933) rekindles an almost extinct hope that some day the makers and talkers of films will make clear to themselves what a film is, what its parts are, and the properties of its parts.

Mr Dalton has pointed out the hitherto occult fact that strips of celluloid are not the primary components of our visual experience, that these strips are not found ready-made under the gooseberry bush, and that a strip carrying the record of some visual event can no more be cut to alter its length than can the human body be cut to alter its height.

Here are some more obvious and unnoticed facts to be pointed out. Celluloid and silver deposits are as fundamental to a theory of the cinema as is the colour of the director's hair. The film is not, except commercially, essentially photographic. To resolve the film into terms of "motion" is nearly as foolish as to resolve it into terms of "frames." Unless the meaning of "motion" is defined it is waste of time to treat of "motion-composition," which at any time can only deal with motions that are periodic and eternal. All parts of the film, however small, have a definite beginning, middle, and end. Last—it is difficult to see how the theorists have missed it—a film run backwards is not the same film as that run forwards, although it is evolved by means of the same piece of celluloid. Let indignant theorists work out the implications of their published remarks before they declare themselves innocent.

The trouble is that theorists want the fun of working out a theory of manipulation of film material without taking the obvious step of finding out what the material is. The only man to make any research on the nature of the material was Dziga Werthoff, who got it rather muddled, to put it kindly.

So far I follow Mr Dalton, but no farther. When wounded pride takes charge, logic takes the background. He "cannot assent to a theory which makes the director the sole creative artist," because he is a scenarist. Neither can I, not because I am or am not a scenarist, but because questions of credit in a film theory would be as sensible as references to contraception in a proof of the binomial theorem. Otherwise I could view with equanimity a theory which assigned the credit, in whole or part, to the scenarist, the make-up man, the exhibitor, Uncle Tom Cobleigh, or The Seven Deadly Sins, which last have been assigned much of the blame till now.

From a practical point of view, the scenarist is entitled to all the credit *if* he does his job so well that assistants, following his instructions to the letter, can construct on the screen the exact replica of his mental film. That is, he must describe his mental film *completely* in all its detail, temporal and spatial. He can only do this by supplying his assistants with the film itself. In that case he would, I suppose, be called a director. The question seems to be one of nomenclature. It certainly is not one of film theory, which is not concerned with the domestic arrangements of film studios.

Mr Dalton is right in assuming that, if the film theorists cannot be taken literally, then they cannot be taken at all.

However, he is not right in assuming that "constructive montage" or, more accurately, film construction by emphasis on the ordinal properties of visual events, is demolished because it is carried out by B instead of A.

The theorists have only themselves to blame for being misunderstood. There is an obscure belief that artistic principles can only be discussed in a tone of hysterical lyricism, presumably because of the subtlety of artistic methods. This is nonsense. Art, in its own way, demands higher precision than mathematics, in exposition as well as in execution. Far more subtle ideas than art are normally discussed with precision and lack of ambiguity.

Let the theorists clarify their ideas on the nature of film material before they fool around with theories of construction. In a very few years, even "practical" men will be wanting all the well-founded theory they can get.

ROBERT A. FAIRTHORNE.

A CINEMA IN SCHOOL.—Our cinema at the "William Rhodes" School, Chesterfield, has been in existence two years, and we have had 20,000 attendances at our weekly shows. At the present time the average attendance is 550—ranging in age from six to fifteen years.

The films shown are all silent and the programme, chosen by the master in charge, depends on the film available, and the desires of the children as ascertained by a questionnaire and by frank discussion between teacher and pupil.

The following table illustrates the preference of the various age groups:—

6-8.—(Excluded from too thrilling films): Cartoon, Comedy.

8-11.—1. Story and most epics; 2. Comedy; 3. Nature and Animals; 4. Industrial; 5. Scenic.

11-15.—More varied opinions. 1. Story and Epic; 2.

- Comedy; 3. Industrial (how things are made);
4. Nature. (Girls prefer Nature to industrial);
5. Scenic.

An admission charge of 1d. serves to cover the charge for the hire and carriage on films, but the Education Committee pay for electricity and the hire of the hall is free. The teachers have contributed in making a screen, painting blinds, and constructing a work bench in the rewinding room.

Among the films we have shown are the following:—
Comedy: *Charlie the Hobo*, Mutt and Jeff Cartoons, Reiniger's *Cinderella*. Industrial: *Port of London*, *Port Sunlight*, *This Progress*. Story: *Stampede*, *One Family*, *Shiraz*, *The Glittering Sword*. Epic: *Drifters*, *Turksib*, *Epic of Everest*, *Conquest*.

Two interesting facts gleaned from the questionnaire reveal the very earnest desire to see a favourite picture again; certain films are always in request and the interest in these never seems to wane, while often an old film with poor technique carries approbation on account of its sincerity and interest. It is rather amusing to find some boy stoutly aver that a film of making gummed paper is the best he has ever seen.

There are many discussions on the subject of silent versus talkie films; many boys prefer silent pictures and complain that they cannot hear what is being said in the talkie film. I suspect that the strain of listening and the difficulty of "tuning in" to the various screen voices is too much for the child. Older boys prefer the sound films.

Since the cinema is in school, films are discussed in class and the children are prepared. This may be the reason for the fact that in no instance has a programme palled.

W. H. GEORGE.

SHORT STORY FILMS.—The work of the modern short story writer has disclosed a multiplicity of new ideas. He has found out that he need not stress romantic love. After all, the main topics in social circles are not love-matches—these are dismissed as automatic occurrences—but the curious happenings or scandals in the lives of others.

Take one example of a picture that is not a romance, *Platinum Blonde*. A rich girl decides to marry a reporter, simply because his intriguing ways took her fancy. The subject-matter of the film dealt with examples of his whimsical attitude to life, and our interest was centred on the living modes of those who live perilously by the pen. Here's another, *Loud Mouth*—just one idea, how when a cheeky loud-mouthed crabber shouts out at the psychological moment,

he causes events to fail. There are hundreds of famous short stories, too, which remain to be filmed. Casually, I think of "The Damned Thing," by Ambrose Bierce, of "The Little Piece of String," by Guy de Maupassant, or "The Necklace." And there are hosts of other masterpieces.

ROBB LAWSON.

REVOLUTION AND ART.—The outside world is the supreme test for a man in the sense of being a conscious verification of what he is for and against.

The outside world is the supreme test for a creative worker: can he, in general, create apart from the Revolution and continue to exist apart from it?

Face to face with the golden mountains of Hollywood I too was subjected to this test. And I underwent it not in an attitude of haughty refusal of wordly delights and benefits, but by the modest organic refusal of my creative and constructive faculties to create in the conditions of a different social organisation and in the interests of a different class.

In the impossibility of creating on the other side of the demarcation line dividing the classes was all the mighty strength and force of the proletarian Revolution, like a whirlwind annihilating all those who oppose it, and like an even more powerful whirlwind dominating those who once choose to throw their lot in with it.

So acts, feels, and thinks every member of the pleiad of Soviet artists; many of us coming through Revolution to art, and all of us calling through art to Revolution.

S. EISENSTEIN in the *Soviet Culture Review*.

IS the dearth of plots really part of a deep spiritual crisis or is it rather an aesthetic "alibi" put forward by all the producers of the world? The great poets never felt any need of what is known as a plot or "great idea." Shakespeare almost always took material from current history or classic poetry or from the contemporary theatre and used old worn-out plots from which a mediocre poet could only have made mediocre plays. With this material he wrote stupendously live works. So in our day, taking due account of differences in the case, we see that a capable producer who is really something of an original poet can draw from the most conventional and even vulgar plot inspiration for a masterpiece.

International Review of Educational Cinematography.

THE CINEMA LIBRARY

RUDOLF ARNHEIM'S "FILM"

HERBERT READ

HERE in an excellent translation,* by L. M. Sieveking and Ian F. D. Morrow, of a German work I mentioned in the first number of *Cinema Quarterly*—Rudolf Arnheim's "Film als Kunst." It is undoubtedly the most important contribution yet made to the serious consideration of the aesthetic possibilities of the film. It is not exactly an easy book, though the author claims that as far as possible only the simplest language has been used in the description of every-day matters.

"If it should chance that in spite of this some passages prove obscure, it is probably due not only to the writer's imperfect powers of presentation but also to the difficulties surrounding a subject that as yet lacks an exact terminology. Even the most elementary conceptions are wanting, and it is hard for the author to plough such virgin soil as it is for the reader—though perhaps this sense of adventure renders it the more exciting."

Luckily the task has fallen to a man who is practical and objective in his outlook, and the general pitfall of metaphysical abstraction, common to most German books on art, is avoided. A statement like the following, made by Arnheim in his "Introduction," gives us immediate confidence:—

"This book will be much occupied with the faculties of sight and hearing and with the technical and psychological idiosyncracies of the screen and the camera, and very little with metaphysics or the philosophy of art, with the mysteries of the craft or the irrationality of aesthetic qualities. It is one of the author's fundamental principles that art is just as much and just as little a part of material life as anything else in this world; and that the only way to understand art is to start from the simplest forms of sensory-psychological impressions, and to regard visual and auditory art as sublimated forms of seeing and hearing. A man who considers the ordinary sensory processes as uncomplicated and unspiritual functions and art as a supernormal portent does justice to neither, and, moreover, denies himself the illuminating realisation of the close connection between the two."

* *Film*. By Rudolf Arnheim. With a preface by Paul Rotha. (London: Faber & Faber. 15s. Ready in May.)



From
"The
Spring
Song"
a new
Soviet
Production
of unusual
lyrical
quality.

Directed
by
V. Gardin.





From "Waltz Time," an adaption by A. P. Herbert of "Die Fledermaus," the Strauss operetta, directed by William Thiele. (Gaumont-British).

Jessie Mathews in a scene in "The Good Companions" directed by Victor Saville.—(Gaumont-British).



Mr Arnheim therefore starts out from the presupposition that the laws governing an art must be determined by the character of its medium. He considers first the limitations of photography in general—the modifications which "nature" undergoes in the projection of solid objects on to a plane surface, the absence of any sense of "depth" in film pictures, the absence of colour and the consequent importance of lighting. Many of the difficulties of film technique arise from the fact that the image given on the screen is neither purely two-dimensional as in a painting or a still, nor wholly three-dimensional, as in nature. The element of movement makes it something between the two.

These differences, which at first sight may seem to imply shortcomings in film technique, are then shown to be the very conditions which determine the aesthetic possibilities of the film. Every art is, as it were, the exploitation of a divergence between reality and representation. That divergence is the space in which imagination plays. Arnheim expresses this point of view very well:

"In order that the film artist may create a work of art, it is most important that he should consciously stress the peculiarities of his medium. It is, moreover, no less important that it should be done in such a manner that the character of the object reproduced should not thereby be destroyed but rather be given force, definition, emphasis. It is due to the divergencies between film pictures and nature that it is possible for a work of art to emerge from a film camera."

Various illustrations are then given of such virtues arising out of necessity. For example, by reproducing the object from an unusual and striking angle the photographer forces the spectator to take a keener interest that goes beyond mere acceptance or observation. The object thus photographed may actually gain in reality, and the impression it makes is livelier and more arresting—a fact long ago realised by Japanese and Chinese artists, and, in imitation of them, by the French Impressionists. Such new perspectives show up all sorts of unexpected shapes in the various parts of the object photographed. Freedom in choice of a point of view enables the film artist to select that aspect of a subject which makes the most effective design on the plane surface of the screen; or to select the most characteristic or significant aspect for a particular emotional reaction. "What had hitherto been merely the urge to record certain actual events, now becomes the aim to represent objects by special means exclusive to the film. These means obtrude themselves, show themselves to be appropriate, to do more than simply reproduce the required object; they make it more telling, emphasise it, show up

special features, make it particularly vivid, particularly decorative. . . . The attention is no longer rivetted to the actual object, but it is directed gradually to the picture which is to be made of it, and to the important peculiarities of form which the picture may have, even though they are not contained in the object itself. Art only begins where mechanical reproduction leaves off, where the conditions of reproduction serve in some way to mould the object." There is no hesitation about this important principle; Arnheim affirms: "Every good film picture is satisfying in a purely formal sense as a linear composition"—linear and not plastic because of the picture's lack of depth. From this point of view, the possibility of a stereoscopic film giving the complete illusion of space is to be feared, as is the reproduction of natural colours. It cannot be too often repeated: it is the divergences of the film from nature that give it the possibilities of an art. From this point of view even the unnatural make-up of the film star is to be welcomed; her face becomes a symbolic mask, as in Greek and Japanese drama.

I referred to the author's excellent treatment of the principles of montage in my previous article; other potentialities of film technique dealt with include the moving camera, the film run off backwards, the accelerator, slow motion, cutting-in a still, fading in and out, superimposition, the use of special lenses and reflections. The next section of the book deals with film subjects and their effective presentation from a psychological point of view. The material of the film is the world itself, and as in all arts, it is essential to maintain contact with nature. Hence the danger of standardisation:

"Scenario authors seem to live withdrawn from the atmosphere of this world. The stuff from which they get their inspiration is not derived from real life but from films that have had successful runs. The inbreeding resulting from this method becomes a serious danger when it includes not only the story but the whole construction of the picture down to the camera angle. That inexhaustible well, humanity, is reduced to a few threadbare types."

The psychology of the mass-produced film is dealt with at length; the tender subject of the scenario-writer much more briefly. "Film art needs film artists and nothing more." The genesis of the sound film is described, its relation to the stage play and the radio play discussed, and the important distinction between the sound-film and the hundred-per-cent. talkie driven home. The function of music in the film is also given adequate consideration. Finally, some of the social aspects of the film are dealt with, the conclusion being that we get, and will continue to get, the kind of film we

deserve. "What will happen to the film depends upon what happens to ourselves."

We are left with the impression that the subject has been dealt with by a man who not only has a sound knowledge of the economic and technical conditions of film production, but also of the general principles of aesthetics which govern all the arts. We cannot ask for more. This is at once a pioneer and a standard book from which all future discussion of the film as an art must proceed.

PURPOSE AND ADMIRATION—By J. E. Barton. (London, Christophers. 10s. 6d.) The study of any particular art form, if it is to be grounded on essentials, requires an underlying knowledge of the purpose of all art. In no medium is this so true, or so little appreciated, as in cinema, which must be regarded as in some measure a synthesis of several arts. In this lay study of the visual arts J. E. Barton attempts to give some idea of the conception of art as a whole and of its relationship to life. He deals with modernism, architectural functionalism and the application of machinery, as well as classical painting and plastic art; and though it is difficult to understand why he has omitted any consideration of the film—except a brief mention of its decor, which he somewhat condescendingly admits is useful in educating the popular eye in matters of interior decoration—the omission detracts little from the primary value of the book, which lies in its simple explanation of the great principles which are eternal and common to all art. Sensibly declaring that aesthetic enjoyment cannot be imparted like the rules of arithmetic, but only by the contagion of other people's enthusiasm, guided by a certain amount of historical knowledge and helped by a little preparatory thinking, the author aims to stimulate rather than instruct; and if his enthusiasm is at times naïve it can hardly fail to provoke thought. He regards art not as something remote and rarified, but as an influence in everyday life essential to man's well-being. To our friends in the studios we should recommend the closing chapter, in which it is maintained that passion (in the spiritual or intellectual sense) "is the only state in which man can act, create, or love without ulterior motive," and that art must be "oxygenated by fresh air from the regions of active necessities and living emotions."

N. W.

FILMLAND IN FERMENT—By E. G. Cousins. (London: Dennis Archer. 10s. 6d.) This book does not concern itself greatly with the past achievement of the film, but devotes itself to the problems of to-day, and suggests solutions for to-morrow. With the Soviet cinema as his model, the author looks on the art of the film as a creative and not an imitative or recording art, and claims that "it can employ every other art in its scope, and dispense with every other art if necessary or expedient." Only Russia of the film-producing countries, he suggests, has convincingly demonstrated the art of the film. He makes the provocative forecast that the nation which best applies the principles evolved by the Soviet directors—constructive scenarism, constructive photography and constructive cutting—will be allotted the contract of entertaining the world.

IL FONOFILM—By Giuseppe Lega. (Florence, "Nemi," Via degli Alfani. 12.50 lire.) A brief study, copiously illustrated by photographs and diagrams, of the art and technique of the sound film. The technical and economic aspect of the film is dealt with as well as its cultural and artistic possibilities. Documentary, drawing its inspiration from nature, is regarded as "the real and classic" cinema.

DOCUMENTS 33. March 1933. (Brussels, 6 Rue Gabrielle.) The fact that this new monthly review, edited by Stephane Cordier and devoted to modern movements in art and literature, intends to be principally concerned with the cinema, is a gratifying indication of the growing recognition of the film's importance as an intellectual force. Contributions by notable Belgian writers in this first number include a review of current tendencies, articles on the American and British cinema, on documentary and revolutionary films, and reviews of new films and books. The subscription is nine belgas.

NOUVELLE EQUIPE. Janvier-Mars, 1933. (41 Rue de Loxum, Brussels.) This number of a young Belgian review of a Catholic tendency contains an article running to thirty pages on the reform of the cinema. It is signed by three writers—Charles Dekeukeleire, William Rombauts, and Paul Werrie. After discussing the various aspects of the film, both aesthetic and social, they come to the only possible conclusion: the reform of the film depends on a reform of the social order, which in its turn depends on a reform of the spirit. When all is well outside the cinema, all will be well within. "*Réforme de l'esprit d'abord.*"

FILMS OF THE QUARTER

THE AMERICAN MOVIE

●

AMERICA as always comes first in a review of cinema production which has bulk as its basis of calculation; but this quarter, American pictures have not only been the most numerous, but also the most vital. No other country can show half a dozen films with the quality of *Cavalcade*, *I am a Fugitive*, *If I Had a Million*, *Air Mail*, *Trouble in Paradise* and *Mr Robinson Crusoe*. These six films may be taken as representative of the most significant tendencies in current American film production. Hollywood, feeling the vast British market slowly slipping away, has produced *Cavalcade* as a grand gesture to the people of the Empire; and in so doing, has made what is generally accepted as Britain's best film. It is to be followed by other Hollywood-British pictures including a version of John Balderston's play, "Berkeley Square." *I am a Fugitive* and the other films of the American chain-gang system are representative of the curve towards sensationalism, a curve which includes Cecil de Mille's spectacular *Sign of the Cross*.

If I Had a Million is one of the all-star films which have followed naturally and inevitably on *Grand Hotel*; but this picture, it seems to me, represents a legitimate use of a number of stars in a single production. Each star is given a part to suit his or her personality, and the episode is handled by a director who appreciates the player's individuality. Thus the star, instead of being an intrusion in the theme, becomes an integral part of it, an aid to its expressiveness as well as a commercial asset. The idea used by this film, however, as Campbell Nairne points out, is limited in application. Other all-star films may not so effectively disguise their commercial motive.

America's films more than those of any other country reflect the activities and problems of its people, and of this tendency *Air Mail* and *American Madness* are typical. Such pictures with an idea, a purpose and a meaning for to-day, we do not make in Britain. *Trouble in Paradise* and *Mr Robin-*

son *Crusoe* are the work of screen individualists, and are thus only incidentally representative of American production. In the first, Lubitsch has wittily inversed the moral code and produced his most subtly satirical film since *The Marriage Circle*. And Fairbanks whose last film broke new ground in travelogues, shows us in his animated Heath Robinson cartoon, *Mr Robinson Crusoe*, that he can put new life and vigour into one of the oldest screen stories.

The remainder of the quarter may be briefly summarised. Britain has produced *The Good Companions*, but little more of note, though the placing under contract by London Film Productions of Elizabeth Bergner, Paul Czimmer and Alfred Hitchcock promises well for the future. Various aspects of German production are represented by *Der Träumende Mund*, *Kadetten*, *The White Flame* and *Emil and the Detectives*. Clair's film has come from France. But more interesting has been the indication in *Pred Maturitou* and *Ekstase* that Czechoslovakia is going to follow an independent and individual line in film production.

The quarter has seen the production of an unusually large number of interesting shorts, headed of course, by the Disney Silly Symphonies in colour and including his other work, the Ideal Cinemagazines, and the Laurel and Hardy comedies.

FORSYTH HARDY.

CAVALCADE

Production: Fox. Direction: Frank Lloyd. Screen play by Reginald Berkeley. Chief cameraman: Ernest Palmer. With Diana Wynyard, Clive Brook, Herbert Mundin, Una O'Connor, Ursula Jeans and Beryl Mercer. Length: 10,073. Distribution: Fox.

Noel Coward's play, "Calvacade," on which the film is based, was a great popular success; it was also his least original piece of work. But as a production, to which Coward brought the stagecraft of which he is a master, it was good spectacle and first-class theatre. It was a panorama of English history, observed mainly as it affected a few selected individuals, from the beginning of the present century to the present time. The plot was of the simplest description: Robert Marryat and his butler, Bridges, went to the Boer War and returned safely; the children of master and man grew up and fell in love; Marryat's elder son was drowned in the *Titanic*; his younger son was killed in the Great War. But in presenting the reactions of his characters to events in which the commonalty shared, Coward touched the springs of memory and emotion in the spectator who was not too young or too unfeeling to have experienced, on his own behalf or for others, the sorrows of parting, the anxieties of helpless waiting, the anguish of loss, which are the bitter fruits of war. Thus "Cavalcade" was for most people genuinely, and not sentimentally, moving.

Just so the film, a faithful transcription of the play, will move its audiences and will be popular. The film is, of course, even better theatre than the stage production, and Hollywood extras must have been enthusiastic about the mammoth spectacular display of troops, the enormous Armistice Day crowd in Trafalgar Square (complete with omnibus advertising "Chu Chin Chow"), and so on.

Like the play, the film takes on something of the character of a national epic; and though towards the end a sequence of rapid shots expresses a protest against war and the muddle-headedness of the age, the national or nationalistic element rises triumphant. And the film ends on an imposing patriotic note, with the massed singing of the National Anthem against a shot of St Paul's, with golden cross picked out (looking very much like a picture postcard), and finally against the head of King George in relief on a medallion in close up.

This national epic was produced at Hollywood—a stroke of irony which has fluttered the critics. But is not the film business, like the armament industry, truly international? Moreover, Hollywood is, according to its lights (however glaring!) thoroughly efficient. Consequently *Cavalcade*, with its cast of actors speaking not American but English (and were not our ears duly grateful!), with its period dresses and its old music-hall songs, might, so far as it touches its verisimilitude, have come out of an English studio.

The production as a whole is good without being, except for the crowd work, in any way notable. But the comic relief, supplied as usual by the lower orders—to wit, the servants—is too exuberant if not extravagant, and strains the balance of the film. Frank Lawton, in a small part, again impresses by his quiet sincerity. There are some interesting double exposures.

MARK SEGAL.

LE QUATORZE JUILLET

Production: Films Sonores Tobis-Paris. Direction and Scenario: René Clair. Photography: Georges Périnal. Design: Lasare Meerson. Music: Maurice Jaubert. With Anabella, Pola Illery, Georges Rigaud, Raymond Cordy and Paul Olivier. Length: 8,856. Distribution: National Distributors.

Clair's fourth sound film is his least important achievement. Such a comparison does not necessarily bring it down to the artistic level of the everyday, studio-stamped production. Clair is still an individualist, a creative artist working unhampered by the limitations of the box-office; but in this film he no longer appears as a pioneer. He is revealed as hesitant, doubtful, uncertain about his position. True, he does not retreat; but he pauses as if prepared to rest on his achievement until his fellow directors can catch up with him. And when an artist thus loses self-confidence, something fine goes out of his work and it is left limp and lifeless.

So with *Le Quatorze Juillet*. It lacks clarity, perception, and, most of all, purpose. For the most part, it drifts about amid sentimental situations which seem to have a fatal fascination for Clair as they had for the Chaplin of *City Lights*. In this respect *Le Quatorze Juillet* resembles *Sous les Toits de Paris*, though there the sentimental story was expertly handled, and we had the compensation of Clair's experimental use of sound and music. In *Le Quatorze Juillet* sentiment absorbs Clair's almost undivided attention, and the quality of

the film suffers as a result. As compensation, we have only the lovely flashes of wit that stamp the film unmistakably as the work of the director of *The Italian Straw Hat* and *Le Million*.

It is for those flashes of wit that *Le Quatorze Juillet* will be remembered; and it is only during those that the film becomes really alive. There is the dancing in the streets of Montmartre on the night of the national fête—a sequence delightfully observed and deftly pointed; there is the conventional bourgeois family that marches primly through the film; there is the forced gaiety of the restaurant, the eager gossip of the concierge, the volubility of the tireless taximan. And, chief delight of all, there is the exquisite politeness of the eccentric *bon viveur* of Paul Olivier. His adventure with the pistols in the restaurant is superb. But fine moments, be they ever so fine, do not make a fine film; and though the story of the little flower-girl and the *petite amie* who comes between her and her lover is well enough told, it does not matter very much, and has little except the tender performance of Anabella that will keep us from forgetting it.

In his next film Clair must get rid of this sentimental complex and get back to satire and slapstick. It is his work as intellectual satirist, not as sensitive sentimentalist, that has given him an undisputable place among the great directors of to-day.

F. H.

THE GOOD COMPANIONS ✓

Production: Gaumont-British. Direction: Victor Saville. Scenario: W. P. Lipscombe. Photography: Bernard Knowles. With Edmund Gwenn, Jessie Matthews, John Gielgud and Mary Glynne. Length: 10,146. Distribution: Ideal.

J. B. Priestley's book, apart from its phenomenal success, obviously contained the stuff of which good story-films are made. Three of its four principal characters break away from security, throw caution overboard, and abandon themselves to the winds of adventure; and the stay-at-home spectator can with them vicariously indulge his own desire for recklessness. The adventurous trio become involved in the fortunes of a travelling concert party, thus affording opportunities for song and dance and for back- and front-stage glimpses, of which at any rate the studios never tire. And there is in the written work a zest and a genuine good-fellowship between the members of the concert party which the film to some extent reproduces.

The film follows the book closely and competently, so that readers of the book will not be disappointed in the film. And as the strength of the book lay in the Yorkshireman, Jess Oakroyd, so the strength of the film lies in Edmund Gwenn's fine rendering of the part. His dialect is a delight to the ear; and his reference to a "moocky ploog" dissolves the entire audience in laughter. Jess and his Yorkshire dialect really give the film something of a British character, which is more than can be said of (say) *Rome Express* (with Conrad Veidt, Esther Ralston and Gunther Krampf!).

Of the rest of the cast, Mary Glynne is good as Miss Trant, but Jessie Matthews appears ill at ease as Susie Dean. Max Miller's two-minute character study as a music salesman deserves notice.

The great advance which has been made in sound technique was demonstrated by the perfect reproduction of Henry Ainly's voice in

speaking a short Prologue. But it was chastening to hear that wonderful instrument utter mellifluously a series of commonplace phrases ending with a reference to "the Dinkie-Doos"!

M. S.

HELL'S HIGHWAY ✓

Production: Radio. Direction: Roland Brown. Photography: E. Cronjagger. With Richard Dix, Tom Brown. Length: 6,455. Distribution: Radio.

An inexpensive, second-feature production with a sentimental kid-brother story in a chain-gang setting: it would be of no interest whatever if it had not been directed by Roland Brown, who made *Quick Millions*.

Brown's approach to films is unlike that of any other American director. His technique is harsh and unsentimental, but far from lacking in humanity, and he has a pretty sense of satire and "wise-cracking." In *Quick Millions*, where these attributes were not at all blocked, he achieved a terse and staccato continuity, and a vigorous exposition of gangdom which no one has yet rivalled. *Hell's Highway* is less successful as the chain-gang background has been frescoed with the afore-mentioned brother-love—in which Brown is definitely not interested. On the other hand, when sentimentality changes to a more legitimate emotion, Brown becomes a great director—for example, in a scene where the escaping kid-brother is shot in the back by a warder.

But it is in the more documentary aspect of the chain-gang camp that Brown is at his best. Its indecent horrors are not stressed, not played up in any way. They must happen. It is a chain-gang. If only all directors could say so much in so little we should waste less time in super-cinemas and enjoy ourselves more. A most interesting and—more important—most stimulating piece of cinema.

BASIL WRIGHT.

I AM A FUGITIVE ✓

Production: Warner. Direction: Mervyn le Roy. Based on the autobiography of Robert F. Burns. With Paul Muni. Length: 8,104. Distribution: Warner.

This is one of those staggeringly efficient supers (cf. *Big House*, *Scarface*, etc.) which form a convenient medium for America's exposition of its own barbarity.

No pains evidently were spared to make every sequence as realistic and as exciting as possible; Paul Muni is a fine actor; and the film is less episodic than most of its type. Yet there is, I am sure, a fundamental decency lacking—the decency of sincerity. The reason, after all, for lavishing cash on this production was not primarily a burning desire to rid the U.S.A. of one of its myriad plaguespots; it was simply that the story was sensational enough to draw box office cash in excess of studio expenditure. I submit that no decent document of this type is possible under those circumstances.

Enjoy *I am a Fugitive*, therefore, for its minor horrors and thrills, its whips and dynamite, bloodhounds and motor chases; also for the excellence of Muni himself. But I shall be surprised if your blood boils.

B. W.

ENDURANCE

Production: Gaumont-British. Photography: Frank Hurley. Commentary: Commander F. A. Worsley. Length: 5,900. Distribution: W. and F.

This film is a record of Shackleton's Antarctic Expedition of 1914-1916 in the "Endurance," with some supplementary pictures of the voyage of the "Quest" in 1922, in which Shackleton died. Substantially, this is the old silent film re-cut and re-edited, with the original lecture by Commander Worsley added as spoken commentary.

Endurance is a documentary film of the most thrilling character, the representation of man's epic struggle against the overwhelming powers of nature. There is grandeur and tragedy in the shots of the gallant vessel battling against the fury of tempestuous seas and being slowly overcome by the unrelenting pressure of the ice-floes. There are also some charming shots of penguins and sea-elephants, and some lovely snowscapes.

The photography—the taking of which was in itself a work of heroism—is excellent. Part of the time Hurley was reduced to taking stills by magnesium flares.

The starkness and simplicity of the commentary make it a perfect accompaniment of the film. Commander Worsley, who was Captain of the "Endurance," speaks with entire unself-consciousness and with a pleasant sense of humour.

M. S.

IF I HAD A MILLION

Production: Paramount. Direction: Ernst Lubitsch, Norman Taurog, James Cruze, Norman M'Leod, Stephen Roberts, William A. Seiter, H. Bruce Humberstone. With Charles Laughton, May Robson, Alison Skipworth, Charles Ruggles, Richard Bennett and others. Length: 7,373. Distribution: Paramount.

Why seven directors, eighteen authors, and fifteen stars should have been employed on one film is not quite clear. Was Paramount, jealous of *Grand Hotel*, anxious to parade its talent? The result of the experiment may be compared to a book of short stories, each by a different author. It is a collection of shorts rather than a full-length film. What imposes a kind of unity is the appearance in each episode of the chief character—an eccentric millionaire who goes about distributing million dollar cheques to people selected at random from the city directory.

Perhaps *If I Had a Million* was not intended as a serious experiment: there are definite limits to the number of themes which can be exploited episodically. But, though it opens up few possibilities, it deserves attention both as a novelty and as a piece of filmcraft. It is slickly turned out and well balanced, none of the episodes falling below a high standard of technical accomplishment.

The comic note is held longer than the tragic. The comedy for the most part is unashamed slapstick, and once again we realise that sheer destructiveness—as Laurel and Hardy have shown—can amuse just as much as the drawing-room cross-talk of Lynn and Walls. Alison Skipworth and W. C. Fields, as a couple who use their money to smash up road-hogs, are delightful; so is Charles Ruggles as a downtrodden husband in a china shop, who breaks crockery and has to pay for it out of his earnings.

There are one or two glorious comic touches. A suppressed clerk in a huge office, on receiving his cheque, walks gravely along corridor after corridor, through a series of doors, arrives in his chief's room, insults him, then solemnly withdraws. He has not spoken a word, and his expression has not changed. Laughton is the clerk, and Lubitsch gets the credit for these three minutes of brilliant direction. This sequence shows real understanding. So, too, does that in which a prostitute, having just got her million dollar cheque, goes to a first-class hotel and stretches herself in luxurious loneliness on the best bed it can offer.

CAMPBELL NAIRNE.

DER TRAUMENDE MUND ✓

Production: Matador-Film. Direction: Paul Czinner. Photography: Kreuger. With Elisabeth Bergner, Anton Edthofer, Rudolph Forster. Distribution: Film Society.

Elisabeth Bergner is the most lovely lady and the most perfect actress. Like a reallaimé nymph, she eludes the memory after the final fade-out, and remains a dream—until her next film recaptures the beauty of her face and movement. There is no other woman on the screen to compare with her.

Czinner has been her faithful director—ever since the days of *The Violinist of Florence* and *Nju*. He subjugates everything to her presentation, and devotes all his craft to catching the almost imperceptible flashes which make her acting so much more moving than that of any other actress.

The story? Yes, there is a story—of a woman torn between love of two men, and her suicide. Commonplace and slowly developed, but because of Bergner, exciting. If only Conrad Veidt could have played opposite her instead of Forster, it would have been more so. I remember especially the concert-hall scene, where Bergner falls in love with the violinist while he is playing Beethoven's concerto. This is beautifully done.

B. W.

EMIL AND THE DETECTIVES ✓

Production: U.F.A. (Günther Stapenhorst.) Direction: Gerhard Lamprecht. With Fritz Rasp. Length: 6,670. Distribution: Film Society.

It is remarkable that the cinema all but ignores the very considerable audience of children that supports it; and it is tragic that the few films specially made for children lead one to wish that they had been ignored. To take a couple of fairly recent films: *Puss in Boots* was a confection of saccharine and slop; while *Tom Sawyer* was self-conscious, sentimental and sophisticated.

Erich Kästner's book "Emil and the Detectives" has happily undergone no such sea-change as poor Mark Twain's works suffered at Hollywood. The film, like the book, takes us into the ideal world of boyhood—that region which flourishes on a curious mixed pabulum deriving from crime detection, warfare and the immortal Red Indians. In its identification with the imaginative ideology of boys the film is a greater achievement than *Peter Pan* (play or film, immaterially). The acting is largely by boys who (contrast Jackie Coogan!) look like boys and behave like boys.

Emil, the hero of the story, is robbed of his money on the way to Berlin. His sleep in the train is the occasion of a delightful dream sequence in which trick photography is cleverly used. On arrival in Berlin, Emil tells his woe to another boy, Gustav with the motor-horn. Gustav summons a crowd of small boys who help Emil to track the thief—the man in the bowler hat (Fritz Rasp). Emil recovers his money and returns home in triumph.

This jolly film will be acclaimed by grown-ups and children alike.
M. S.

THE CIRCUS OF SIN ✓

Direction: E. A. Dupont. Length: 5,626. Distribution: Wardour.

E. A. Dupont must have known that he was taking a big risk when he set out to repeat his achievement in *Vaudeville* with another film roughly similar in plot. Did the suggestion that *Vaudeville* should have a successor come from the director himself? I scarcely think so. It is difficult for a critic to judge *The Circus of Sin* without unconsciously drawing a comparison between the two films. The manner in which story and atmosphere are reproduced invites such a comparison. Even if *The Circus of Sin* is considered on its own merits, however, it must be regarded as a very average piece of work, and only its imaginative direction distinguishes it from many other circus films.

It would have been surprising indeed if Dupont had repeated his early success. The renown of *Vaudeville* was against it; but apart from that he had to face difficulties created by the introduction of sound and spoken dialogue. Unluckily for his American and British reputation, the copy of *The Circus of Sin* destined for English-speaking audiences seems a travesty of the original. The atmosphere is unmistakably that of a Continental circus, yet the chief male characters—who look about as un-American as can possibly be imagined—are given lines which smack strongly of Hollywood. The effect is grotesque. It points the futility of trying to impose American pace and slickness on films which lose their essential Teutonic quality when "pepped up." Dupont is not to blame for the dubbed dialogue, but he must be held guilty of overdoing artistic effects in what seems to be a desperate attempt to compensate for a lack of adequate characterisation. His cameras are inclined to dwell too long on such detail as beer frothing and cigarette ends lying drowned in wine glasses. Some of his most beautifully composed shots have little or no validity.

On the other hand, much of the camerawork is excellent. As in *Vaudeville*, we have the exciting experience of seeing events through the eye of the performer. When the betrayed husband advanced with murder in his eyes, we felt that we were also advancing. This identification of the actor with the spectator is carried a stage further in *The Circus of Sin*. When the giant swing turns over we get the impression of giddiness and great height by flashes of blurred bodies, swinging shadows, inverted faces. Dupont has not yet learned to use his microphone to such good effect, but the whine of the swing, gradually deepening in note as its momentum increases, helps to work up a climax of almost unbearable suspense. The impact of sound and image batters the spectator's mind into belief that a tragedy is really imminent.

Anna Sten's acting has much the same restraint and deliberation as Lya de Putti's. But her style is quite different. She is casual and natural where Dupont's earlier heroine was exotic. There could hardly be a greater contrast in physical type.

C. N.

KADETTEN

Production: Terra. Direction: Georg Jacoby. Photography: Hoesch. With Albert Basserman, Franz Fiedler, Trude von Molo. Length: 8,000. Distribution: British Lion.

This film was widely billed as a successor to *Maedchen in Uniform*.

It is nothing of the sort. It is not even "psychological." On the other hand, I found it pleasant enough, with its military waltzes and similar soothing Teutonisms.

The story is about the cadet who dislikes military training and writes music. Good. He is half in love with his step-mother, who is in love with the college riding-master, who is a scoundrel with a drunken servant. Not so good. Everyone is highly honourable; the shade of "Eric, or Little by Little" is evoked, and all ends happily.

Direction, editing, and photography are not above the average. Acting is good. Film societies pressed for time will find that the omission of the last reel makes a very pleasant finale.

B. W.

THE WHITE FLAME (Der Weisse Rausch)

Production: H. R. Sokal. Direction: Dr Arnold Fanck. Photography: Richard Angst, Kurt Neubert and Hans Gottschalk. With Leni Riefenstahl. Length: 7,521. Distribution: W. Bayley & Co.

In this film Leni Riefenstahl is back under the competent direction of Dr Fanck, so that *The White Flame* is a much more satisfactory production than *The Blue Light*, in which Fraülein Riefenstahl made the mistake of directing herself. Incidentally, *The Blue Light* appears to be the later film.

The film has no story, but is entirely devoted to ski-ing. It opens with a spectacular display; passes to a sequence in which Fraülein Riefenstahl, as a novice, receives instruction; and concludes with the major section of the film, a "fox hunt," in which the "foxes" are Fraülein Riefenstahl (suddenly an adept) and Hannes Schneider. Fifty champion skiers take part in the film in addition to the principals, and every variety of manoeuvre is shown, remarkable skill and speed being displayed.

The photography is again brilliant, and the scenes in which the massed formation of skiers moves against the lovely snow background of the Austrian Tyrol are very impressive. An attempt has been made to provide comic relief, but some of the humour is crude, and the brief episode in which Fraülein Riefenstahl becomes tipsy is both out of place and unnecessary. There is some German dialogue, the purport of which is conveyed by superimposed English titles. To spectators who are not versed in the technique of ski-ing, the film will probably appear over long.

M. S.

KUHLE-WAMPE or "To Whom does the World belong?"

Direction: S. Th. Dudow. Scenario: Brecht and Ottwalt. Photography: Gunther Krampf. Art Direction: Scharfenberg and Höllering. Music: Hans Eisler. With Hertha Thiele, Ernst Busch, Martha Wolter and Adolf Fischer. Distribution: Federation of British Film Societies.

Drastic censorship has spoilt the dramatic continuity of this film and left its impression of the unemployment problem in Germany haphazard and inconclusive. *Kuhle-Wampe*, a colloquial expression signifying a comfortable retreat, was made by a group of persons interested in unemployment in Germany, and it aims, if not lucidly, at a statement of the case for organising the German unemployed. A slight story of the effect of unemployment on the members of a single family is used to link together more general impressions of modern German life. These include a workers' sports festival, and in this sequence notably the cutting is effective, the music gay and the movement brisk. The film closes with an ingeniously handled discussion on working-class economics on a crowded train of great interest to anyone familiar with the language. A sincere film, but obscure in its present form.

F. H.

PRED MATURITOU

*Production: A-B-Film Limited, Prague. Direction: Svatopluk Inne-
mann and Frantisek Jerhot. Art Direction: B. Feuerstein and
V. Rittershain. Photography: (interior) Otto Heller; (exterior)
Vaclav Vich. Scenario: Joseph Neuberg. Music: E. F. Burian.
With J. M. Svoboda, A. Novotny, Jindrich Plachta and Frank
Smolik. Distribution: Film Society.*

This Czech talkie, reviewed by Karel Santar in the winter number, was shown by the London Film Society and will be seen at the Academy. It is a film of distinctive merit, as regards both its manner and its matter, and suggests that Czechoslovakia is not going to be content merely to copy the films of Germany, Russia or America. To what Santar has written, I may say a word of congratulation on the direction: crisp and competent throughout, it has several moments of novel technical ingenuity, including the use of slow-motion photography to emphasise rhythm during sports and the cutting and camera angles of a discussion among schoolmasters, and it achieves a remarkable lyrical quality in the sequence depicting a visit to Macha's lake, a romantic spot famous in Czech literature. The film has its *longeurs*, and, towards the close, becomes unnecessarily involved in detail; but these are minor faults.

F. H.

SHORTS

SILLY SYMPHONIES IN COLOUR

Though the Silly Symphonies come under the heading of "Shorts," they are not to be thought small in any other respect but that of footage. Each holds as many ideas in its thousand feet as an ordinary film has in ten thousand. They represent a concentration of ingenious draughtsmanship, comic perception, and pure cinema movement. Small in length, they are big in ideas, execution and entertainment.

Walt Disney is not an artist who, having found one of his productions successful, is content to reproduce it *ad infinitum* lest he should, through experiment, encounter failure. He was the first of the cartoonists to experiment with the sound cartoon form, the first to perceive and reveal the possibilities of the new medium. Now he has further demonstrated his ambition to explore the artistic potentialities of the film by producing the Silly Symphonies in colour. These productions—*King Neptune*, *Flowers and Trees*, and *Babes in the Wood*—are more than mere cartoons in colour. They form a finger post to the next important screen development. For once colour so fine as this is encountered in the cinema, the black and white of the everyday film will no longer satisfy.

The cartoon is, of course, a peculiar case in the colour cinema, and Disney has certain definite advantages over the producer of naturalistic films that must not be overlooked in considering future development. The use of colour in the ordinary picture tends to reduce the subtle interplay of light; but in the cartoons, flatness is not only permissible, but is an essential of the form. And Disney has the advantage of selection which is not possible to the same extent in the case of the cameraman. He can choose the most pleasing colours and combinations of colours and be quite independent of nature in securing his effects. It is possible in this respect to compare the colour cartoonist and the cameraman of the cinema with the painter and the photographer.

The use of colour in the cartoons has not resulted in a cramping of Disney's fancy, or a falling off in execution. Disney's fantastic world grows "curiouser and curiouser," recedes further and further into fairy-tale. As before, the movement of the cartoons is exciting, the draughtsmanship ingenious and the music perfectly and pointedly in harmony;

but the coming of colour has brought a new quality that is almost lyrical. Nonsense, as Chesterton has said, is never far removed from poetry; and Disney is nearer poetry than ever before in these new Silly Symphonies.

F. H.

A SYMPHONY OF THE SEA

Production: British Instructional Films. Direction: Geoffrey Barkas. Length: 3,008. Distribution: Pathé.

A poem of the sea. A lovely picture while it stays on the sea, but sentimental and dragged out towards the end—when the handsome young fisherman's beautiful young wife waits for her husband 'who never returns. On the sea, the camera makes music of sails and waves: but when it enters a fisherman's cottage it lets us down with a flop into stagey settings.

EVELYN SPICE.

KING'S ENGLISH

Production: British Instructional Films in conjunction with the B.B.C. Direction: Mary Field. Length: 3,312. Distribution: Pathé.

An informative impression of different dialects in Britain. Words are the film's raw material, and the aim is to show how differently the same words may sound in different parts of the country. The news of a successful attempt on the land speed record at Daytona—shown in the film—is read in their varying accents by Essex farmers, Cornish fishermen, Welsh shepherds, Glasgow boiler-hands and others. Explanations by an Englishman to a confused Frenchman augment the film's instructive quality. A neat job of characterisation and sound, done with a thoroughness that is satisfying.

E. S.

THE CHANGING YEAR

Production: British Instructional Films. Direction: Mary Field. Length: 2,860. Distribution: Pathé.

British Instructional add to a notable collection of studies of animal and insect life this impression of "the majestic march of the seasons." The study of wild life at different periods of the year is held together by a story of two young people on an English farm, and the players suggest in their performances an unfamiliarity with their rural surroundings. These sequences are too long and tepidly sentimental, but the film on the whole preserves a nice balance. The photography is good and the commentary restrained.

E. S.

POWER

Production: Cambridge University Cinema Society. Direction: Gordon Taylor.

An attempt at documentary which is not altogether successful; but the mere fact that an amateur society has attempted to make a

sensible film is worth applause. Moreover, the idea, as opposed to the execution, is excellent—an analysis of different forms of power, both descriptively and historically. Film groups should see it. It is on standard stock.

B. W.

CANTERBURY

Production: Gainsborough.

A picturesque lantern lecture (hardly a wisp of movement, barring a rather serious camera-weave, all through); the commentator succeeds in proving somewhat naively that Canterbury is the centre of the Empire. The quality and composition of the photography are excellent.

B. W.

PRAGUE

Production: Avanti-Tonfilm. Photography: W. R. Lach and Leo Freund. Music: Smetana's Moldan Symphony. Length: 1,000 (app.) Distribution: Film Society.

A short Czech documentary of Prague with music closely fitted to the moods of the film and subtly heightening its atmosphere. Devices of photography and cutting are used to give emphasis to special features of the city, and there is a long but not ineffective travelling shot by which we are taken out to a hill overlooking the city. Photography is clear and the Tobis-Klangfilm recording of Smetana's music excellent.

F. H.

ABITIBBI CANYON

Production: Photo Sound Corporation, Montreal. Producer: H. Maclean. Supervisor: J. M. Alexander. Length: 2,000 (app.).

This short Canadian film describes in vivid terms the construction of a dam to control and utilise for power the waters of the Abitibi River in Montreal. The theme gave an obvious opportunity for dramatic description, and as with all films that have man's conflict with nature as their basis, *Abitibi Canyon* is fine and strong. The boring of the tunnels to divert the river's course, and the building of the great dam is followed by the steady rising of the harnessed water, and the dramatic moment comes when the first stream trickles over the runaway and the job of work is finished. The photography is clear and the film has natural sound with a commentary added.

F. H.

FILM SUPPLY

Film Societies and other organisations wishing to get in touch with the distributors of any films mentioned in these pages may, in cases of uncertainty, address their letters c/o *Cinema Quarterly*.

FILM SOCIETIES' PROGRAMMES

THE FILM SOCIETY, 56 Manchester Street, London, W.1.
December 11, 1932. *Steel* (Gaumont). *A Bronx Morning* (Film Soc.). *Water Folk* (B.I.F.). *Jen's Colour Abstract* (Film Soc.). *Silly Symphony*, *The Fox* (Ideal), *Kuhle-Wampe* (Film Soc. Federation).

January 22. *Magic Myxies* (B.I.F.). *The Invasion of Shanghai* (Film Soc.). *Mickey's Orphans* (Ideal). *Der Träumende Mund* (Film Soc.).

February 12. *Prague* (Film Soc. Federation). *Studies in Close-up* (B.I.P.). *The New Generation* (New Era). *Pred Maturitou* (Film Soc.).

March 12. *Stambul* (Film Soc.). *Studies of Dancing in the Sound-film* (Film Soc.). *Pacific 231* (Film Soc.). *Ekstase* (Film Soc.).

BIRMINGHAM FILM SOCIETY. Hon. Sec., S. G. Hawes, 163 Pershore Road.

December 11, 1932. *Lichtertans* (Filmophone). *Bluebottles* (Film Soc.). *Ashes* (Film Soc. Federation).

January 8. *Philips Radio* (Film Soc.). *Silly Symphony*, *Egyptian Melodies* (Ideal). *Moholy-Nagy's Lichtspiel* (Film Soc.). *En Natt* (Film Soc. Federation).

February 12. *Finding his Voice* (Western Electric). *Steel* (Gaumont). *Jen's Colour Abstract* (Film Soc.). *Charlie at Work; Games of the Slovak Children* (Film Soc.). *Potemkin* (Arcos).

On March 3 Ivor Montague addressed the Society on "Montage: Is There Any?"

EDINBURGH FILM GUILD. Clubroom, 17 South St Andrew Street.

December 18, 1932. *Empire Timber* (E.M.B.). *Even a Tin Can*, *Cinemazine* (Ideal). *The Eyes of Science* (Film Soc.). *Light Rhythms* (Blakeston). *Lichtertans* (Filmophone). *Silly Symphony*, *Birds of a Feather* (Ideal). *Ashes* (Film Soc. Federation).

January 4. *Cyprus* (B.I.F.). *Invisible Clouds* (Gaumont). *The Italian Straw Hat* (Academy). *En Natt* (A. P. and D.).

February 19. *London, City of Tradition* (M.G.M.). *Kuhle-Wampe* (Film Soc. Federation). *A Nous la Liberté* (Universal).

March 12. *Invasion of Shanghai* (Film Soc.). *Turksib* (Arcos). *David Golder* (Academy).

Among those who have recently addressed the Guild are John Grierson, C. A. Oakley, Herbert Read, Norman Wilson, Basil Wright.

A Russian Cinema Exhibition, consisting of stills, technical photographs and posters, aroused considerable public interest.

GLASGOW FILM SOCIETY. Hon. Sec., D. Paterson Walker, 127 St Vincent Street.

December 18. *Crazy Masie; A Bronx Morning* (Film Soc.). *Temptation*.

January 15. *Silly Symphony*, *The Spider and The Fly* (Ideal). *Fischinger's Hungarian Rhapsody* (Filmophone). *Ashes* (Film Soc. Federation). *Stout Hearts and Willing Hands* (Ideal).

February 5. *Games of the Slovak Children* (Film Soc.). *Charleston* (Film Soc.). *En Natt* (A. P. and D.).

February 26. *Plebiscite Programme*. *Sunshine Susie* (Ideal). *Moholy-Nagy's Lichtspiel* (Film Soc.). *Street Scene* (United Artists).

March 19. *The Black Sheep*. *Kuhle-Wampe* (Film Soc. Federation). *Early Comedies*.

Lectures have been given by C. A. Oakley, Clifford Strain and Norman Wilson.

LEICESTER FILM SOCIETY. Hon. Sec., E. Irving Richards, Vaughan College.

December 3, 1932. *Starting in Life* (B.I.F.). *Uberfall* (Film Soc.). Mickey Mouse, *The Beach Party* (Ideal). *The Song of the Market Place* (Arcos).

January 21. Moholy-Nagy's *Lichtspiel* (Film Soc.). *Steel* (Gaumont). *Lichtertanz* (Filmophone). *Mor-vran* (Film Soc.). *The Adventures of Dr Dolittle* (A.S.F.I.). *En Natt* (A. P. and D.).

February 18. *Lichtertanz* (Film Soc.). *Turbulent Timber* (Gaumont). *Jen's Colour Abstract* (Film Soc.). *The Adventures of Dr Dolittle* (A.S.F.I.). *David Golder* (Nat. Distributors).

Lectures have been given by John Grierson, H. R. Lane, and Ivor Montagu.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY FILM SOCIETY.

January 22. *Stout Hearts and Willing Hands* (Ideal). *Thunder, Lightning and Rain* (Gaumont). *David Golder* (Academy).

February 5. Early Chaplin. *Lichtertanz* (Filmophone). *Steel* (Gaumont). *The Jazz Fool* (Ideal). *Ashes* (Film Soc. Federation).

February 19. *The Adventures of Dr Dolittle* (A.S.F.I.). *The Child's Dream*. *Silly Symphony*, *Busy Weavers* (Ideal). *The General* (B.I.F.).

March 5. *The Invasion of Shanghai* (Film Soc.). *The Seashall and the Clergyman* (Film Soc.). *Kuhle-Wampe* (Film Soc. Federation).

SOUTHAMPTON FILM SOCIETY. Hon. Sec., J. S. Fairfax-Jones, 5 Grosvenor Square.

January 18. *The Home Wrecker* (B.I.F.). *The Danube*. *Games of the Slovak Children* (Film Soc.). *Magic* (Pathé). *Turksib* (Arcos). *The Merrill Palmer Nursery School* (London School of Hygiene).

January 19. *Finding His Voice* (Western Electric). *Radio Europa*. *Plants of the Underworld* (B.I.F.). *Mickey's Marathon* (Ideal). *Kameradschaft* (Nat. Distributors).

February 15. *Bluebottles* (Film Soc.). *Rain* (Film Soc.). *Plant Magic* (B.I.F.). *Secrets of the Soul* (Gaumont).

February 26. *Studies in Close-up* (B.I.P.). *The Invasion of Shanghai* (Film Soc.). *In Der Nacht* (Film Soc.). *Almost Arcady* (B.I.F.). *En Natt* (A. P. and D.).

March 15. *The Lower Danube*. *The New Generation* (New Era). *A Brons Morning* (Film Soc.). *The Italian Straw Hat* (Academy).

The Society has now formed a Study Circle.

THE TYNESIDE FILM SOCIETY. Hon. Sec., John A. Lilburn, 47 Caroline Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne. The first season of this new society will consist of three performances, for which the subscription is six shillings. The objects of the Society include Sunday evening exhibitions, arranging for the inclusion of films of a special character in the ordinary programmes of local cinemas, and the holding of lectures and discussions.

PRESTON FILM SOCIETY. Hon. Sec., Judith Todd, Farrington Lodge.

A successful exhibition of stills has been held in the Harris Museum and Art Gallery during February and March. The stills were arranged in sections to illustrate the use of natural and artificial settings, human material, grouping, etc., and included both historical and recent examples. A series of lectures and film exhibitions were held in connection with the exhibition.

MANCHESTER and SALFORD WORKERS' FILM SOCIETY has held no performances owing to the difficulty of securing a suitable cinema, but hopes to be able to resume its activities in the near future.

THE AMATEUR FILM-MAKER

SCENARIO SERVICE

“THE scenarist, I believe, has not been sufficiently encouraged in the amateur movement,” said Michael Rowan in the last issue of *Cinema Quarterly*, amongst whose readers, “if anywhere, will be found potential scenarists whose ideas can be of use in helping to raise the standard of amateur production.” Ideally there should be no sharp division between scenarist and director, but in the present condition of affairs it is preferable that a capable technician should work from a good scenario not his own in preference to a poor one which is. Michael Rowan’s suggestion that *Cinema Quarterly* should act as a means of bringing amateur scenarists and producers together has met with general approval, and already many societies have made application to receive scenarios for consideration. Provided the quality and quantity of MSS. submitted is sufficient to justify a continuance of the scheme, a scenario service will become a regular feature at the disposal of readers.

Scenarists who “realise both the limitations and the opportunities of the amateur and can put down on paper, themes, treatments, and abstract ideas which the amateur producer can put into filmic images” are strongly urged to submit either draft or detailed scenarios for the consideration of societies registered for the receipt of MSS.

All communications regarding the Scenario Service should be addressed to Michael Rowan, c/o *Cinema Quarterly*, 24 N.W. Thistle Street Lane, Edinburgh, 2, and must include stamped addressed envelope for reply.

Societies wishing to receive MSS. for consideration should indicate what type of scenario is desired. Applications must bear the small coupon (C.Q. No. 3), which should be cut from the outside back cover.

All MSS. submitted (each of which must have a similar coupon attached) remains the copyright of the scenarist.

Where MS. is accepted, Societies are urged to invite the scenarist, wherever possible, to work in collaboration on the production. *Cinema Quarterly* accepts no responsibility for loss or infringement of MSS. submitted for the Scenario Service.

(Pressure of space and the inclusion of several general articles of a technical nature have made it necessary to hold over other contributions intended for the AMATEUR FILM-MAKER SECTION.—EDITOR.)

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